



# Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study (HWSS) Procedures

Issued by the Standards and Enhancement Office

**2023-24 Edition**

Technical updates of this document are undertaken on an annual basis to reflect changes to the University's organisational and management structures and to incorporate earlier, approved amendments to related policies, procedures and regulations

This document relates to the current year. If you become aware of any previous versions that are available on line please notify [SEO@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:SEO@bolton.ac.uk) so that action can be taken to remove the document(s).

# Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study Procedures

## 1 Introduction

The Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study procedure [The Procedure] is part of the University of Bolton's Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study Policy.

The Procedure is intended to be supportive and to:

- Enable the student to progress, meet the required learning outcomes and complete their course;
- Ensure the best interests of the student are being considered in relation to their personal situation, health, mental health and/or wellbeing;
- Ensure that the student is receiving adequate support;
- Ensure that disability related reasonable adjustments have been considered and were appropriate put in place;
- Identify a plan of how to progress with clear boundaries and expectations; options may include continuing their programme with adjustments or suspension of studies for a set period of time, repeating a period of study, and in some circumstances withdrawing from their programme of study.

### 1.1 Structure of the Procedures

The Procedure has three levels which represent the degree of concern and/or the perceived seriousness of the situation:

- Stage 1 – Emerging Concern/Early Intervention;
- Stage 2 – Significant and/or ongoing concerns; and
- Stage 3 – Critical, serious or persistent concerns.

The Procedure may be invoked and resolved at any stage. In most cases Stages 1 and 2 should be used before escalation to Stage 3. If the concerns are not remedied by the recommended and agreed actions at one stage the next stage may be instigated. In most instances a case will not be escalated to Stage 3 if the issues of concern are resolved at Stages 1 or 2.

Using the templates found in the appendices a record of the meetings (Appendix 2) and agreed action plans (Appendix 3) should be sent to the student and to all other attendees of any meeting no more than 5 working days after the meeting has taken place. Records of meetings at Stage 2 and Stage 3 should be forwarded to Student Services for uploading to the Student Record for monitoring purposes.

If a student is invited but fails to attend a scheduled meeting at any stage, contact should be made with the student to ascertain the reason for their absence. If appropriate, another meeting should be arranged. If contact is unsuccessful and/or the student does not attend the re-arranged meeting or engage with the process, and where the concern continues, the student should be escalated to Stage 2 or Stage 3 of the process. At Stage 3, in the event that the student does not attend the meeting, the Panel will agree a suitable course of action in the absence of the student, based upon the available evidence.

## 1.2 Where can I get advice about this procedure?

Please contact:

- Student Advisors [studentadvisors@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvisors@bolton.ac.uk)
- Disability Advisors [disabilityinfo@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:disabilityinfo@bolton.ac.uk)
- Mental Health Advisors [MHAdvisor@Bolton.ac.uk](mailto:MHAdvisor@Bolton.ac.uk)
- Wellbeing Advisor/Coordinator, Life Lounge [lifelounge@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:lifelounge@bolton.ac.uk)
- University Counsellors [lifelounge@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:lifelounge@bolton.ac.uk)
- Disability Services Manager
- Students' Union
- Any Dean of Faculty/Head of School or academic area/Personal Tutor

## 1.3 Who can instigate the procedures?

The procedure can be invoked by the student him/herself, or a member of staff with a direct link or primary responsibility for the student's needs. For example:

- An appropriate member of staff from the student's Programme Area e.g. Personal (Academic) Tutor, Enhanced Personal (Academic) Tutor, Programme Leader, Module Leader, Postgraduate Research Student Supervisor; or
- A recommendation from a member of staff from one of the University's Student Support Services.

A third party (for example a student's friend or peer) may also raise concerns with a member of staff. Where members of staff have concerns about, or are made aware of concerns about, a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviour they should contact their manager and/or their Head of School/academic area who will consider whether this procedure should be implemented.

Where it is determined that the procedure is to be implemented at any Stage, this should be discussed with the Student Services team to ensure that any information about the student that is available within Student Services is also considered.

## **2 Stage 1– Emerging Concern and Early Intervention**

Stage 1 is used when there are emerging concerns about a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviour and the impact this has on his/her ability to progress on the course or at University or the impact their behaviour is having on others.

Concerns may include but are not restricted to: a deterioration in health, attitude, personal conduct, attendance, ability to meet deadlines, ability to succeed academically, or ability to participate in student life. For research students this may include missed meetings with supervisors or mentors and/or failure to submit work. Once concerns have been raised about a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviour an appropriate member of staff should be designated as the 'lead person' to investigate at Stage 1. This would normally be the student's Personal (Academic) Tutor, Enhanced Personal (Academic) Tutor, Supervisor or Programme Leader.

The lead person should gather all the information together such as whether the issues have been raised with the student previously, their academic profile, attendance information, missed deadlines, Student Services interaction, to inform the discussion with the student. The lead person should contact the student in a sensitive and understanding way to request a supportive meeting to discuss and consider the concerns that have been raised. This communication can be via email or letter, but where possible a face to face discussion should precede a written communication to prepare the student. The student should be given clear information that this meeting takes place within the HWSS procedures, with particular emphasis on the fact that it is intended to support the student.

### **2.1 Stage 1 – Initial Meeting**

Whilst other relevant members of staff may be invited to the meeting, and the student may wish to bring a member of the Students' Union as their representative, as Stage 1 is intended to be relatively informal, it is recommended that numbers attending the meeting are kept to a minimum and efforts should be made to make sure the student does not find the meeting intimidating. If appropriate Mental Health Advisors, Counsellors or Disability Advisors may be invited to the meeting. The student should be informed who else will be present and the reason they will be there.

The meeting with the student should take place in a private space and the following points should be considered and included as appropriate:

- Identification/clarification of the concern being raised including where possible examples;
- Opportunity for the student to give their perspective on what is happening;
- Clarification of actions to date and strategies being adopted;
- Clarification of whether the situation has occurred before and if so what previously was helpful;
- Clarification of relevant University boundaries and rules that the student needs to be aware of;
- Clarification of the student's personal responsibility;
- Consideration of what would be helpful and make the difference to the student in order to support him/her and minimise concerns;
- Signposting the student to any relevant University Support Services or external support agencies that he/she may benefit from;
- Clarification of agreed actions and options to support the student and minimise the concern (eg extended deadlines, accessing Student Services, taking some limited 'time out');

- Agreement of a date to meet again to review the situation and who needs to attend. The length of time between the meeting and the review should be agreed by all present, taking into account relevant academic and personal factors;
- Explanation that a continuation of the same or any additional concerns could result in implementation of Stage 2 or Stage 3 of this procedure or if appropriate referral to another University Procedure.

Using the standard report template (Appendix 2), a report of the meeting and agreed actions (Appendix 3) should be documented by the lead person and a copy sent to the student no more than 5 working days after the meeting has taken place.

A copy of this report should be kept in a confidential place within the student's School or, in exceptional cases when the Stage 1 lead person is a member of staff outside of the school, within the service undertaking the Stage 1 meeting for an agreed period of time, normally for the duration of the student's course.

## **2.2 Stage 1 – Review/Follow Up Meeting(s)**

The review/follow up meetings should include:

- Review of the student's progress against the action plan;
- Explanation/exploration of any further concerns arising;
- Exploration of further/on-going support needed (the member of staff should help the student to access support available to them if necessary);
- Agreement of whether further action is necessary.

## **2.3 Stage 1 – Possible Outcomes**

If the concern has been resolved and the student has engaged with the action plan, no further action may be required. The general expectation is that the student will take personal responsibility and fully engage with the process and with the support recommended.

If concerns continue, however the student has engaged with and, where appropriate, accessed support, new targets could be agreed, the action plan updated and a further review meeting arranged.

If the concerns have not been addressed, support has not been accessed and the member of staff feels that progress has not been made, or the situation deteriorates, the decision can be made to progress to Stage 2 or Stage 3.

## **2.4 Stage 1 – Non-attendance at meetings**

When a student does not attend the first scheduled Stage 1 meeting contact should be made to arrange an alternative meeting with the student. In cases where the student is invited but fails to attend subsequent Stage 1 meetings:

- The situation should be discussed in the student's absence with the Personal Tutor and Programme Leader;
- If there are straightforward options about how to proceed, agreed expectations, support options and plans should be communicated to the student with a timescale for completion and date of review;
- If the situation is more complex or unclear, steps should be taken to consider the case at Stage 2 – the student should be made aware of this decision in writing;

- The student should be made aware that if he/she fails to take the opportunity to meet to discuss concerns about his/her health and wellbeing and/or fails to provide any supporting evidence of an underlying issues, then it may be necessary to consider under Unsatisfactory Academic Progress, Unsatisfactory Attendance or the Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, as appropriate, as an alternative route to deal with the concerns raised.

### **3 Stage 2– Significant and/or Ongoing Concern**

Stage 2 of the procedure is used when there are ongoing concerns following Stage 1, or when there is significant concern about a student’s health, wellbeing, behaviour, safety and/or ability to study and where a higher level response from the School and/or wider University is required. It may be necessary to invoke Stage 2 of the procedure immediately.

The Head of School/academic area (or appropriately senior nominee) should take the role of ‘lead person’ at Stage 2 of these procedures.

If it is unclear whether the student’s situation presents a serious risk of harm to themselves or others advice should be sought from the member of Professional Services staff with appropriate experience and authority to consider how best to apply these procedures including direct referral to Stage 3.

The Head of School/academic area shall establish the full scope and nature of the concerns raised and may consult with relevant colleagues to gather this information.

#### **3.1 Stage 2 – Initial Meeting (stage 2.1)**

The Stage 2 meeting should include relevant people who have an academic or support role with the student. In most cases consideration at Stage 2 suggests the need to seek input from Student Services. Attendees may include:

- Senior academic staff with appropriate experience and authority;
- Member of staff from Disability Services/Student Services or other University Professional Services where appropriate;

The student should be informed of the meeting and its purpose in a clear, written invitation from the lead person, giving at least 5 working days notice of the meeting unless the student agrees to attend earlier or there are good reasons for taking more immediate action.

The invitation should include:

- Date, time and venue of the meeting
- The purpose of the meeting including why Stage 2 has been initiated;
- A web link to the Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study procedure;
- Advice on whether the student needs to provide any specific documents (eg medical evidence);
- A list of who will be attending the meeting and the reason they will be there;
- An explanation that the meeting will be confidential and that personal information relating to the health of the student will only be shared with those who have a direct involvement in the HWSS meeting;
- Explanation that the student may be accompanied by someone in a supporting capacity (for example a parent, a Students’ Union representative or a friend) but not by someone acting as an advocate. Students registered as disabled may also be accompanied by a support worker eg sign language interpreter or mental health worker as appropriate to their needs.

The Stage 2 meeting should cover the following:

- 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 University expectations and Regulations;
- Consideration of realistic academic timelines in relation to outstanding assessments;
- Clarification of the students responsibility at the University;
- 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;
- Signposting the student to any relevant University Support Services.

### **3.2 Stage 2 – Possible Outcomes (stage 2.1)**

- If a student has been referred directly to Stage 2, an action plan should be agreed with the student detailing any steps the student will need to take and the support to be provided. Regular monitoring meetings should be arranged with the student and a nominated member of staff (normally the lead person or the student's personal tutor);
- If a student has been referred from Stage 1 following the Review/Follow-up meeting, a further action plan should be agreed detailing any steps the student will need to take and the support to be provided. Regular monitoring meetings should be arranged with the student and a nominated member of staff (normally the lead person of the student's personal tutor).

In either of these cases the agreed actions and support options to change and improve the current situation are to be agreed (eg consideration of realistic academic timelines and/or extensions in relation to outstanding assessments, taking some time out from studies, deferral, interruption to studies, transfer to part time attendance, accessing Student Support Services – in the event that an interruption to studies or a transfer to part time is agreed the student must be advised to discuss with the Student Funding Advisor as there may be an impact on the student's funding arrangements)

In either of these cases the student should be made aware of what will happen if the action plan is breached which will normally involve their case moving to Stage 3.

### **3.3 The Stage 2 Review/Follow-up Meeting(s) (stage 2.2)**

The Stage 2 Review Meeting should consider the following:

- Review of how the student has been since the first Stage 2 meeting;
- Review of whether agreed actions have been undertaken;
- Review of the progress made in any agreed actions and whether the University feels the actions have been met and within the agreed timeframe;
- Explanation/exploration of any further concerns arising;
- Consideration of new or ongoing relevant mitigating evidence;
- Exploration of further/ongoing support/adjustments that may be necessary;
- Agreement regarding whether a further action plan is necessary. If the concern has been resolved no further action plan will be necessary. If concerns continue or have increased an action plan may be put in place for further review at Stage 2 or Stage 3 may need to be invoked.

By the end of the agreed monitoring period/Stage 2 Review meeting, the lead person will make the decision as to whether the issue or concern is resolved or not. If the issue is resolved no further action will be necessary.

### **3.4 Stage 2 – Review - Possible Outcomes (stage 2.2)**

If the issues are not resolved the lead person will make a decision regarding the appropriate next step. This will be one of the options 1 and 2 set out below:

**Option 1:** a recommendation for a specific academic arrangement which may include a student agreeing to suspend their studies for a period of time. Such recommendations should be agreed by the student's programme team and the student.

Where a voluntary suspension of studies is an outcome at Stage 2 the lead person should make sure that full consideration has been given to the implications of this action which are clearly communicated to the student. Students should be advised to seek advice from the Student Funding Advisor and, where appropriate, the International Student Journey Officer, about the implications of suspending or interrupting their study. Please see the University of Bolton Student Suspension Policy at the following link: <https://www.bolton.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Student-Suspension-Policy-2019-20.pdf>

Any voluntary suspension of studies should agree a preliminary return to study date, and regular touch points should be built in. In cases where suspension of studies is agreed it must be made clear what needs to happen in order for a return to study to be considered. Responsibilities for arranging meetings and obtaining evidence and documentation must be confirmed and included in the meeting notes using the standard template found in appendix 3.

**Option 2:** A referral to Stage 3 Supported Study Panel. This will be appropriate in serious cases for example where there is evidence of a risk to the health and safety of the student or others in the University community. This course of action would be used when it is considered that, temporary exclusion, suspension or withdrawal may be the appropriate course of action if the student has not agreed to a recommendations or action plan made under Stage 2.

### **3.5 Stage 2 – Non-attendance at meetings**

When a student does not attend the first scheduled Stage 2 meeting at stage 1 contact should be made to arrange an alternative meeting with the student. Thereafter, throughout Stage 2, in cases where the student is invited but fails to attend subsequent Stage 2 meetings the situation will be discussed in the student's absence and the following will be determined:

- If there are straight forward options about how to proceed, agreed expectations, support options and plans will be communicated to the student with a timescale for completion and date of review;
- If the situation is more complex or unclear, steps will be taken to escalate to a Stage 3 meeting;
- The student should be made aware that if he/she fails to take the opportunity to meet to discuss concerns about his/her health and wellbeing and/or fails to provide any supporting evidence on an underlying issues then there may be no alternative to using the Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures or Unsatisfactory Academic Progress procedures, as appropriate, to address the concerns.



## **4 Stage 3 – Critical, Serious or Persistent Concern Referral to Supported Study Panel**

Stage 3 of this procedure should be used where there is serious or persistent concern about a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviour, safety and/or ability to study and cope at University. In most cases escalation to this stage will follow attempts to address concerns at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2. However, in some cases it may be appropriate to proceed directly to Stage 3.

Examples of when it may be appropriate to proceed directly to Stage 3 might be:

- Where health, wellbeing and ability to study are seriously compromised;
- When all other options to deal with the situation have been explored locally and a wider University perspective is required;
- When a higher level of decision making and authority is required;
- Where there are serious concerns regarding risk to the health and safety of the student and/or where there is a perceived threat and risk to others;
- Where an immediate temporary exclusion is considered to be in the best interests of the student or the University.

A Supported Study Stage 3 Panel should be convened and supported by the Academic Support Service and/or the Standards and Enhancement Office.

The panel should include:

- The Dean of Faculty(Chair)
- The lead person(s) from previous stages
- Head of School/Academic Operations Lead
- The student's Personal (Academic) Tutor/Enhanced Personal (Academic) Tutor if not included in the listing above
- The Disability Services Manager (or appropriate nominee)

The decision to convene a Supported Study Stage 3 Panel will be made by the Dean of the student's Faculty or in their absence by their nominee (an appropriate Senior Manager) in conjunction with the Disability Services Manager (or their nominee in their absence). This decision will be made in consultation with the member(s) of staff raising the concern.

In considering the membership of the Stage 3 Panel, care should be taken to balance the need to bring together the right combination of people to consider the student's case 'in the round', with the possible risk of additional stress and anxiety caused by a large and formal Panel. In all cases, the student needs to be made aware at the outset of who will be included. 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, whereby there would be an initial meeting without the student present followed by a meeting where the student has the opportunity to meet a smaller number of people. The role of the initial meeting (when the student is not present) is to present key information to the Chair and to debate potential options regarding the student's health, wellbeing, behaviour and academic progress. Final decisions are made after the second smaller meeting when the student is present.

The objective of a Stage 3 Supported Study Panel is to ensure that the University considers all possible options to enable the student to continue with their studies.

The student should be informed of the meeting and its purpose in a clear, written invitation from the Dean of Faculty (or their nominee). The student should be given at least 10 working days notice of the meeting unless the student agrees to attend earlier or there are good reasons for taking more immediate action.

The invitation should include:

- Date, time and venue of the meeting
- The purpose of the meeting including why Stage 3 has been initiated;
- A web link to the Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study procedure;
- Advice on whether the student needs to provide any specific documents (eg medical evidence);
- A list of who will be attending the meeting and the reason they will be there;
- An explanation that the meeting will be confidential and that personal information relating to the health of the student will only be shared with those who have a direct involvement in the HWSS meeting;
- Explanation that the student may be accompanied by someone in a supporting capacity (for example a parent, a Students' Union representative or a friend) but not by someone acting as an advocate. Students registered as disabled may also be accompanied by a support worker eg sign language interpreter or mental health worker as appropriate to their needs.

The student should be encouraged to prepare in advance for the meeting by speaking to key staff, including the Students' Union Advisors. The student should obtain any necessary documentation and reports and give consent for disclosure of medical reports. The student may wish to write a short summary report for the meeting.

In preparation for the meeting all information to be considered should be provided to the Chair 7 working days before the meeting and copies will be provided to Panel members and the student at least five working days before the Panel meets. Key University departments may be invited to provide written summary reports of the present and past relevant/key issues. The contribution of representatives will be subject to Data Protection legislation and/or professional codes of confidentiality. This information will be circulated to Panel members.

The Chair of the Panel should refer to the Finance and Funding Advisors and, where applicable, the International Student Journey Officer with regards to visa advice and how to manage any impact on the student's visa status.

When there is to be a full Panel meeting with the student present, it may be considered helpful to convene the meeting without the student for an initial period of 30 minutes to allow those who have no prior involvement with the student to familiarise themselves with the information prior to the student's arrival in order to understand the issues and the possible outcome options.

At the meeting the Panel will consider the following:

- Summary of present 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 University expectations, boundaries and Regulations;
- Clarification of the student's personal responsibility at University;
- Identification of any further information that may be required such as medical evidence;

- Clarification of the options available to the student at this stage eg part-time study with support, a period of suspension with repeating, or a recommendation for withdrawal of the student;
- Consideration of what would be helpful of make the difference to the student in relation to the options available;
- Signposting the student to any relevant University Support Services/external 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 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, if appropriate;
- In cases where interruption to studies is the outcome, the meeting should consider and make explicit what is required to happen before the student is permitted to return to studies.

#### **4.1 Stage 3 Supported Study Panel: Possible Outcomes**

Following the meeting the Panel will make one of the following decisions. The Chair has the power to make the final decision if the Panel is unable to make a unanimous decision:

- The student is fit to study and there are no further recommendations for actions;
- The student is fit to study, subject to a formal commitment to an agreed action plan with an agreed timescale;
- The student is not fit to study and a temporary suspension or exclusion (see section 5) to allow the student to access support services both within and outside of the University or for the University to obtain further information. The exclusion will be reviewed within 4 weeks as set out below in relation to temporary exclusion;
- The student is not fit to study and is to be subject to a period of suspension (see section 5) from studies with conditions. A student who is suspended from the University may be prohibited from participating in University activities and may either be prohibited from entering the University premises or have restricted rights to enter the premises. The terms of the suspension will be notified to the student in writing, depending on the circumstances of the case. If suspension of studies is recommended the Panel should make sure that both they and the student are fully aware of the implications. Please see the [University Student Suspension Policy](#). The student should be given a clear indication of the proposed return date and regular reviews should be built in. In cases where a suspension of studies is agreed it must be made clear what needs to happen in order for a return to study to be considered and responsibilities for arranging meetings and obtaining evidence and documentation must be confirmed and included in the meeting notes (see Returning to Study Section 6);
- Expulsion or requirement to withdraw. If the Panel concludes, taking into account the individual circumstances of the case and any supporting medical evidence, that there is no reasonable prospect of the student to re-engaging with their programme, a recommendation will be made to the Vice Chancellor (or nominee) that the student is permanently excluded or required to withdraw. This recommendation should only be made in the most serious cases;
- Any other action considered to be appropriate and proportionate.

In cases where permanent exclusion or withdrawal of the student is the recommendation of the Stage 3 Supported Study Panel, this must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor (or their nominee), who will in turn report this to the next meeting of Senate.

A report of the meeting and agreed actions will be documented and approved by the Chair of the Panel. A copy should be sent to the student by post and email and to all other attendees of the meeting not more than 5 working days after the meeting has taken place.

The student will be notified of the outcome of the Panel meeting within 5 working days of the date of the meeting.

Students should be clearly advised of the impact of the interruption on their anticipated completion date, whether of a taught or research programme. In the case of international students, advice from the International Student Support Office should be sought for any interruption which is likely to exceed two months, as this may have implications on the student's visa.

#### **4.2 Stage 3 – Non-attendance at meetings**

When a student does not attend the first scheduled Stage 3 meeting contact should be made to arrange an alternative meeting with the student. In cases where the student is invited but fails to attend subsequent Stage 3 meetings:

- The situation will be discussed in the student's absence;
- A report of the meeting and agreed actions will be documented and approved by the Chair of the Panel;
- A copy of the report and agreed actions should be sent to the student by post and email and to all other attendees of the meeting not more than 5 working days after the meeting has taken place.

## **5 Temporary Suspension or Exclusion**

### **5.1 Temporary Suspension from the University**

The University may determine that there is a good and urgent cause why a student should not continue to attend the University due to health, wellbeing or behavioural concerns or where it is felt the student's continuing attendance may hamper an investigation. In such circumstances the student may be suspended from studies by the Vice Chancellor (or in the Vice Chancellor's absence the Vice Chancellor's nominee providing the nominee is a member of the University Executive Board and they inform the Vice Chancellor of the suspension so that he/she may affirm the action). The suspension will be confirmed to the student in writing.

The decision to temporarily suspend the student will normally be reviewed within four weeks and a Stage 3 - Supported Study Panel will be convened to consider the case.

### **5.2 Temporary Suspension from Work Placement**

The University may determine that a student's work placement arrangements (as part of an academic programme of study) are to be temporarily suspended if it is considered by the Dean of Faculty or Head of School/academic area (or nominee) that there are good and/or urgent causes for concern and risk to the student and/or others in a placement setting that requires mitigation. The temporary suspension of the work placement arrangements will be notified to the student in writing.

The decision to temporarily suspend the student from the Work Placement will normally be reviewed within four weeks and a Supported Study Panel will be convened to consider the case.

### **5.3 Immediate Temporary Exclusion**

The relevant Dean of Faculty may refer a case to the Vice Chancellor (or their nominee) where there is a perceived threat to health and safety of the student or to other students or staff or the University and an immediate temporary exclusion is the most appropriate course of action.

The Vice Chancellor (or their nominee) may impose a temporary exclusion for a set period of time with immediate effect. A student who is subject to a temporary exclusion order is prohibited from entering University premises and from participating in University activities. The exclusion may, exceptionally, be subject to qualification, such as the permission to take an examination or to enter the University premises to attend a meeting with a support service such as the Counselling or Disability Service. The terms of a temporary exclusion will be individual to each case and will be notified to the student in writing. A temporary exclusion order does not affect the student's status as a member of the University.

The decision to exclude will normally be reviewed within four weeks and a Supported Study Panel will be convened to consider the case.

## **6 Returning to Study**

Following a period of absence from the University, students must provide satisfactory evidence that he/she has overcome the original difficulties that hindered their ability to study and/or make academic progress. The precise nature of the evidence needed will depend on the individual circumstances in each case but may include submission of a piece of academic work and/or a report from a GP or recognised independent health professional with sufficient knowledge of the student's circumstances to make an informed assessment of the student's fitness to engage with university life and academic studies. The University reserves the right to obtain a second independent health professional to assess the student's fitness to return to study.

The student is expected to notify the relevant Dean of Faculty in writing of their wish to return to study.

### **6.1 Return to Study Review Meeting**

After reviewing the student's request to return the student will be invited to attend a return to study review meeting with the Dean of Faculty and other members of staff as appropriate.

Other members of staff who may attend the meeting may include (but not be limited to):

- Member of the Student Services team;
- Members of staff from the student's academic department.

The following information will be presented in writing to the student:

- Meeting date, time and location;
- Those who will be attending the meeting;
- The right of the student to be accompanied to the meeting including information about the University of Bolton Students' Union Advisors;
- That the meeting is being dealt with under the Return to Study section of the Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study Policy and Procedure;
- A copy of this procedure.

Following the meeting, one of the following decisions will be made by the Dean of Faculty in consultation with the Disability Services Manager:

- The student is fit to return to study, subject to a formal commitment to an agreed action plan with an agreed timescale;
- The student is not currently fit to return to study and the student should be required to suspend their studies for a further specified period;
- the student is not fit to study and recommendation should be made to the Vice Chancellor (or nominee) that the student be withdrawn (with relevant consideration given as to whether the student could be granted an appropriate exit award).

The Dean of Faculty will notify the student in writing of the outcome of the meeting together with any agreed action plan and/or conditions for continued attendance (if applicable) normally within 5 working days of the meeting.

A suspension or any previous conditions imposed will remain in place until the outcome of the meeting is communicated to the student.

Each situation will be different and it may not be possible for the student to resume their studies immediately depending on their academic status.

The student should be offered relevant support on return to the University in order to ease their transition. It will be necessary to ensure that the student is assisted by their School with advice where appropriate from specialist services such as Student Liaison Officers, Disability Service, Student Funding and/or the Student Counselling service and staff located in the Life Lounge.

The Dean of Faculty (or nominee) should work with the student and relevant members of the Student Services team and other professionals to provide assistance with drawing up a Return to Study Plan (see Appendix 4). This will address:

- The specific study-related support needs of the student in returning to education;
- The support which the student can reasonably expect from the University;
- Involvement of and liaison with external agencies;
- Any longer term support or reasonable adjustments the student is entitled to under the Equality Act;
- Any conditions the University puts in place that might or will apply to the academic provision on offer;

The Return to Study Plan should incorporate a Risk Management Plan that takes account of the experiences that led to the student initially suspending their studies and any other information that is known to be relevant. Any return to study will be subject to the student's co-operation with this process and full adherence to any conditions made.

## **7 Right of Appeal**

In the communication with the student at Stages 2 and 3 and in the event that the student is refused their request to return to study, the student should be made aware that they have the right to appeal against the decisions reached. The student should submit their appeal (see Appendix 5 for HWSS Appeal Form) in writing within 10 working days of them being notified of the decision at Stage 2/Stage 3/Return to Study. The student should address their appeal to the Standards and Enhancement Office.

When an appeal is against any decision other than expulsion/required withdrawal from the University of the student, the Appeal Officer will be a member of the Executive Board (or nominee) who has not had any previous involvement with the case, as far as is reasonable possible.

If the decision of the University is to recommend expulsion/required withdrawal from the University of the student, the Appeal Officer will be the Chair of the Governing Body (or their nominee in the event of their unavailability).

In their request for an appeal, the student should write a statement explaining the reason for their appeal and confirming the grounds for their request. The grounds for an appeal may be:

- a) There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct or the investigation that may render the original decision unsafe;
- b) New material evidence is available which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process and which may have resulted in a different outcome;
- c) The outcome (whether the decision or sanction) was unreasonable.

Students may wish to seek advice from the University of Bolton Students' Union.

The Appeal Officer will consider, in consultation with others where necessary, whether there is a case for considering the appeal. If no grounds for the appeal are found the Appeal Officer shall dismiss the request, informing the student in writing of the reasons for doing so.

If the student's appeal has not been accepted the letter of notification will also be the Completion of Procedures Letter which confirms that the University's internal procedures have been completed.

If it is decided that there are grounds for the Appeal Officer to consider the appeal, the student will be notified in writing that their appeal has been accepted and will be informed in writing of the arrangements for the Appeal Hearing.

### **7.1 An appeal against a decision at Stage 2 or Stage 3**

The case will be considered by the Appeal Officer who will review the decision and the appeal made by the student. The Appeal Officer can consult with any member of staff that may be able to provide relevant information which can include, but is not limited to, the original decision maker, the student's Head of School/academic area and Dean of Faculty, colleagues from the Student Services including the Disability Support Services and the Students' Union representative.

An Appeal Hearing will be arranged by the Standards and Enhancement Office and the student will be invited to the Appeal Hearing and notified of his/her right to be accompanied to the meeting by a companion who will normally be a representative of the University of Bolton Students' Union. The invitation will also invite the student to inform the Standards and Enhancement Office of any reasonable adjustments that are required which will be accommodated where reasonably practicable. The Appeal Hearing will be held, where possible, within 10 working days following the receipt of the appeal request from the student.

Documentation in support of the request for an appeal should be provided to the Standards and Enhancement Office no less than five working days before the Appeal Hearing and will be circulated to the Appeal Officer and student.

The Appeal Hearing will be supported by a member of the Academic Support Team (appeal against decision other than exclusion/withdrawal) or the Standards and Enhancement Team (appeal against decision of exclusion/withdrawal) who will take summary notes.

Following the Appeal Hearing the Appeal Officer will make one of the following decisions:

- 1) To dismiss the appeal:
- 2) To uphold the appeal and decide how the correct decision should be made.  
This could include:
  - a) referring the matter back to an earlier stage of this procedure for reconsideration;
  - b) making an alternative decision;
  - c) referring to another relevant member of staff to make the decision; or
  - d) any other reasonable course of action.

The Appeal Officer's decision will be final.

The Appeal Officer's decision will be notified to the student in writing by way of an Outcome Letter which will also be the Completion of Procedures Letter confirming that the University's internal procedures have been completed.

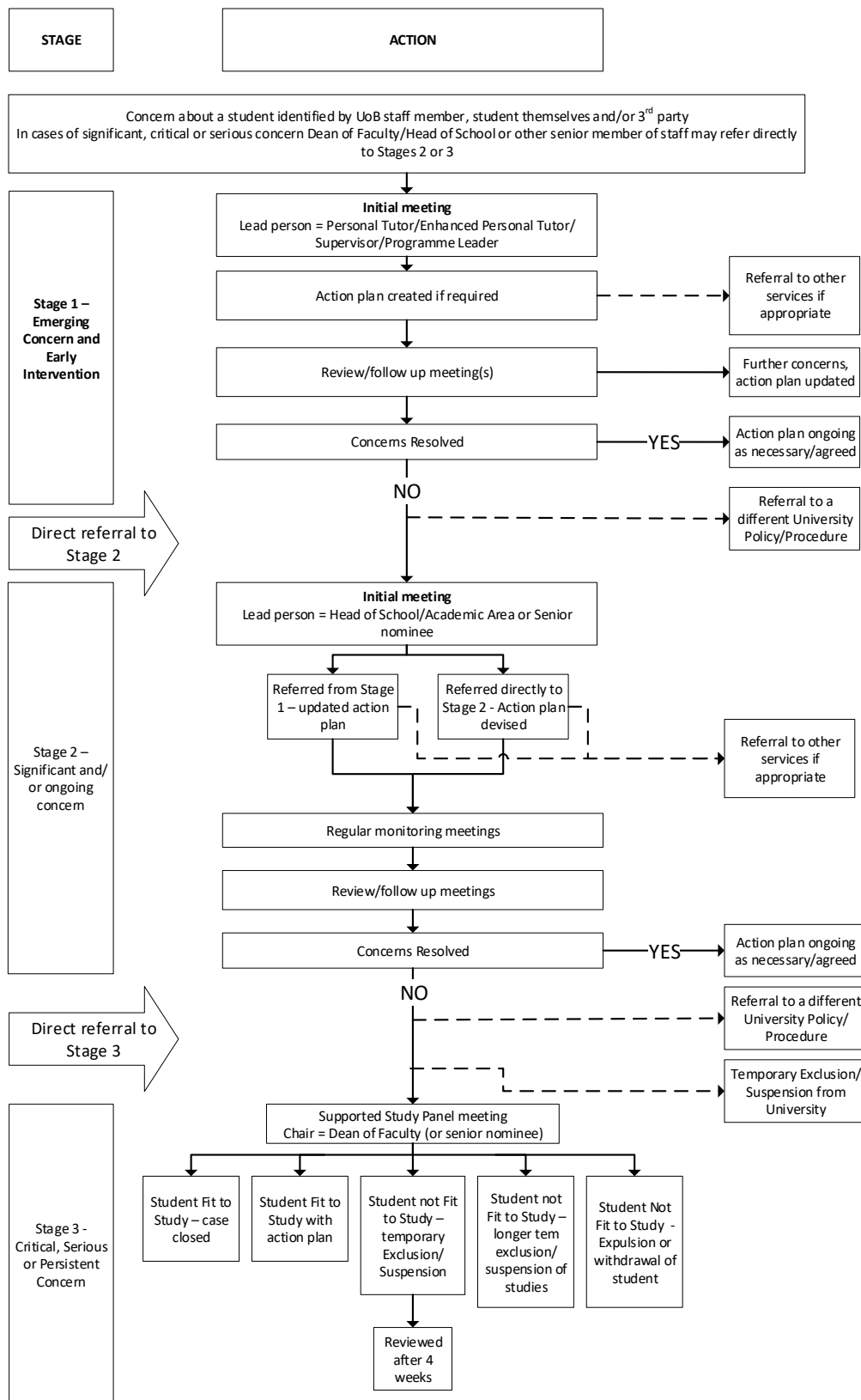
## **8 Completion of Procedures and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator**

If, having received the Completion of Procedures letter which indicates that the student has exhausted the University of Bolton's internal processes, a student believes there has been an error of judgement or that due process has not been followed the student has the right to contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk). Students may also wish to seek advice from the University of Bolton Students' Union Advisors.



# Appendix 1 – Flowchart

## HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SUPPORTED STUDY PROCEDURE



APPENDIX 2 – meeting notes

Concern/issues raised and meeting notes

Student name:	
ID number:	

Brief outline of concern and member of staff who reported them

Brief overview of meeting with the student

**APPENDIX 3**

Agreed action plan for stage \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Student name:</b>	
<b>ID number:</b>	
<b>Date action plan to be reviewed</b>	

Action no	Action to be made	By who	Date to be achieved

I understand the nature of the concern(s) raised by the University, as has been explained to me and outlined in this document and the possible impact/consequences that this/these concern(s) may have upon my own fitness to study.

I also understand the impact that this/these concern(s) may have upon the community of staff and fellow students who are working and studying at the University and to which I belong.

I have agreed to work towards the action plan outlined above, which has been developed to support me.

I understand that if I am unable or unwilling to carry out the action plan, the University will need to consider taking appropriate or remedial actions, or referral as my situation will require.

Whilst I understand that the University has a duty of care to support me, ultimately I am responsible for my own health and wellbeing and it is my responsibility to be fit to study.

Personal tutor/HOS/Chair name \_\_\_\_\_

Personal tutor/ HOS/Chair signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 4 – Suspension and return to study checklist for staff**

TASK	WHO?	WHEN	DATE	SIGNED
Student informed of outcome of Stage 3 Panel Meeting and the reasons for any temporary exclusion/suspension outlined in writing to the student. They must also be informed of any conditions to be met before their return	Chair of the Stage 3 panel.	Within 5 working days of Stage 3 Panel decision about temporary exclusion/suspension from the University		
De-briefing meeting(s) for relevant staff on a 'need to know' basis about the outcome of the Stage 3 Panel meeting and any conditions to be met by the student and the support offered by the University/external services whilst the student is temporarily excluded/suspended.	Chair of the Stage 3 panel.	Within 14 days of communicating the recommendations to the student concerned.		
Student's absence is appropriately managed, documented and notified to the relevant external agencies and internal services.	Head of School/academic area	Within 21 days of communicating the recommendations to the student concerned.		
Student informs the School of their wish to return to study	Student	At least two months in advance of proposed return date		
The Head of School considers the request from the student to return to study and if this is in line with the original conditions eg timeframe and consults with appropriate professional staff eg Personal tutor, Student Services Manager of the student's wish to return	Head of School/academic area	Within five working days of being advised of intention to return		
Review of the satisfactory evidence from the student that he/she has overcome the original difficulties that originally hindered their ability to study and/or make academic progress see section 6 for more details	Chair of the Stage 3 panel.	Within five working days of receipt of appropriate medical evidence		
Due account will need to be taken of any altered structure of the programme of study and of the ability of the University to support the student that could not	Chair of the Stage 3 panel, working in partnership with relevant others	Within five working days of receipt of appropriate medical evidence		

reasonably have been envisaged at the time of writing the conditions eg the relevant course no longer running.				
<b>Outcome of the review of satisfactory evidence may be:</b> 1) Drawing up a 'Return to Study Plan' in consultation with the student and key School staff.	Chair of the Stage 3 panel, working in partnership with others	Within ten working days of receipt of appropriate medical evidence		
2) If the student is unable to provide satisfactory evidence that he/she has overcome the original difficulties that originally hindered their ability to study and/or make academic progress and therefore a return to study is not deemed to be an option, this must be communicated to the student in person if possible, and followed up in writing with advice that they may Appeal the decision.	Chair of the Stage 3 panel.	Within ten working days of receipt of appropriate medical evidence		
If (2) is the outcome and the student does not accept this decision, the student should follow the Appeals stage of this policy and procedure.	Chair of the Stage 3 panel.	Within 10 working days of student being informed of the decision		
If (1) is the outcome; obtain advice and support to facilitate the student's transition back onto the course, particularly in relation to any action that might be required under the Equality Act 2010.	Head of School/academic area	During period of planning return to study		
Follow the Return to Study Plan	Head of School/academic area	During period preceding return to study and for period after return (to be identified in Return to Study Plan)		



**UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON  
HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SUPPORTED STUDY APPEAL FORM**

This form is to be completed for appeals to be dealt with under the Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study Policy and Procedure.

You must submit notification of your intention to appeal within 10 working days of the notification of the decision you are appealing against.

Before completing this form, please refer to the University’s Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study Policy and Procedures:

<https://www.bolton.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/student-policies/>

<b>DETAILS OF APPEAL – TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT</b>	
Name:	Student Number:
Programme:	Level of study (3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8):
School/Partner College:	Year of Study:
Date of Panel/Hearing:	
Date of Outcome Letter:	
Addresses for correspondence in connection with your appeal:	
Postcode:	
Telephone Number:	
University email:	
Private email:	

Please indicate which Panel’s decision you are appealing against:				
HWSS Stage 2		HWSS Stage 3		HWSS Return to Study Decision
Please confirm what it is about the decision that you are appealing:				

## Appendix 5

<p><b>An appeal can only be submitted on one or more of the following grounds. Please indicate the ground(s) for your appeal by ticking the appropriate box.</b></p>	
<p>A. There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct or the investigation that may render the original decision unsafe</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>B. New material evidence is available which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process and which may have resulted in a different outcome</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>C. The outcome/decision/action taken was unreasonable</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>In relation to the ground(s) you have indicated above (A, B or C), please explain for each relevant ground why you are dissatisfied with the decision or penalty at the previous stage of the Procedure.</b></p>	
<p><b>Ground A</b></p> <p>Please explain why you believe that there was an 'irregularity' in the Procedure in how your case has been considered at a previous stage of the process and how you believe this has affected the outcome (include relevant documents with your submitted appeal, or indicate 'to follow' with timescale for their availability).</p>	
<p>Please provide an explanation below together with a list of relevant documents:</p>	
<p><b>Ground B</b></p> <p>Please list the documentary evidence you intend to use, and clearly explain why this was not available at an earlier stage of the procedure and the relevance of the evidence to your appeal (include relevant documents with your submitted appeal, or indicate to follow with timescale for their availability).</p>	
<p>Please provide an explanation below together with a list of relevant documents:</p>	
<p><b>Ground C</b></p> <p>Please explain why you believe the outcome/decision reached or action taken at an earlier stage was unreasonable and the evidence you wish to use to support this include relevant documents</p>	
<p>Please provide an explanation below together with a list of relevant documents:</p>	

## Appendix 5

Request for extension to acquire further information: Should you require further time to acquire additional documentary evidence you can make a request here. To do this you must state:

- the precise nature of the documentation to follow;
- the grounds for appeal it relates to;
- the reason that it is not currently available;
- the date by which you will be able to submit the document.

Please provide details below:

### **Declaration** (you must complete this section)

I declare that the information given in this form is accurate, the supporting evidence is genuine, and that I have read and understood the relevant Policy and Procedure.

Name:

Date:

The completed form should be sent either by post to Standards & Enhancement Office, University of Bolton, Deane Road, Bolton BL3 5AB or via e-mail to: [SEO@Bolton.ac.uk](mailto:SEO@Bolton.ac.uk)

An officer of the University will review your appeal to confirm you have submitted your appeal in time, and have established allowable grounds with appropriate and relevant evidence.