Hughes Hall addresses fitness to study primarily as a tutorial matter, not a disciplinary matter. Members of college should refer any matter of concern to the student’s tutor, who takes the lead in addressing it and keeps the student’s best interest as their primary focus. College tutors will gladly give advice and support to any student, and may well direct them to:

- their own local doctor
- College Nurse and/or Disability Equality Officer
- Disability Resource Centre (DRC)
- University Counselling Service (UCS), with its Mental Health Advisors and self-help resources
- University Students Unions’ Advice Service (SUAS)

This document sets out the procedure which Hughes Hall follows ‘when there is concern that a student’s behaviour or health is seriously disrupting the welfare or academic progress of the student, or of others in the academic community, or has the potential to do so.’ This definition comes from the University’s Ordinances, II.29.1 (www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2016/chapter02-section29.html), and its policy is further outlined on its website (www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/fitness-study-0).

General

This procedure has three levels depending on the severity of concerns, the perceived level of risk and the student’s engagement in addressing issues.

The student’s tutor takes the initial lead, and liaises with the Senior Tutor and other college officers on a strictly need-to-know basis. The tutor will normally start at Level 1, but may take significant concerns straight to Level 2 or exceptionally to Level 3.

The Senior Tutor is responsible for overseeing Levels 2 and 3. This includes ensuring that there is appropriate input from medical and/or mental health professionals, and that relevant documents are shared with relevant parties on a strictly need-to-know basis. If conflicted, e.g. when also the student’s tutor, the Senior Tutor will designate a substitute and the later will take the Senior Tutor’s formal role. Unless urgent action is needed, good notice will be given for formal meetings: at least two working days at Level 2 and four working days at Level 3. At both levels, the Senior Tutor will include the student as much as possible in working to resolve matters, but may need to continue discussion in their absence.

The student may be accompanied at any stage by another Hughes Hall student and/or by a representative of an appropriate university body (e.g. UCS, DRC, SUAS) and/or by a medical or mental health professional, giving notice of their name(s) at least one working day before formal meetings at Levels 2 and 3.

The Senior Tutor may decide to change oversight to a lower level if concerns are addressed, risks are reduced, and the student’s engagement is appropriate.

Level 1

For general concerns, the tutor meets the student following normal tutorial practice, and encourages the student to discuss:

- the issue and its implications for both the student and others
- the sources of support currently engaged, if any
- other sources of support within Cambridge, including medical and/or mental health professionals
If this does not sufficiently alleviate the issue, the tutor outlines this Fitness To Study Procedure, and notes that together they are already addressing concerns at Level 1. The tutor and student agree measures to address the issue(s), and regular review of the situation. If the student responds co-operatively and the measures are effective, no further action is needed.

Level 2

For significant or recurring concerns, the Senior Tutor convenes a Senior Tutor’s Review attended by the student and their tutor. The Senior Tutor consults the Nurse, the Disability Equality Officer, and where relevant the Director of Studies. Together those involved in the Review assess the student’s situation and its effect on both the student and others. They then agree and record an Action Plan, to include:

- support for the student, as appropriate
- academic/behavioural expectations
- actions with review dates

Level 3

For serious or persistent concerns, the Senior Tutor convenes a Case Conference attended by the student, their tutor and where relevant their Director of Studies. Where a graduate student has a course director or supervisor instead, the latter will normally be consulted and/or invited. If the student is unable or unwilling to attend, the Senior Tutor may decide to proceed anyway, but will then invite the student to provide a written statement and/or arrange for a representative to attend instead, normally one of those who could accompany the student (see ‘General’ above).

The Case Conference may propose a second Action Plan to be agreed and formally recorded. It should include the elements listed for a Review, plus potential consequences if the plan is not kept.

Alternatively, the Case Conference may recommend that the student should leave the college: either temporarily, via an application for disregard of terms or intermission following consultation with the academic Department, and subject to the approval of the relevant University authority; or permanently, via a recommendation to the College Council. If necessary, the Case Conference may also recommend immediate action to the President.

Returning to Study

Each case depends upon the specific circumstances and concerns raised. Nevertheless, in all cases return to study depends on satisfactory medical evidence of fitness to study and on the provision of appropriate support services. Evidence must be submitted from health professionals with sufficient knowledge to make an informed statement of the student’s wellbeing and their renewed ability to manage the demands of studying at Cambridge. The college must be satisfied with this evidence before submitting a request to the appropriate university body for the student’s return to study.

Maintaining fitness to study is an ongoing responsibility of the returning student and Hughes Hall. The college nurse will meet with the student prior to their return, and their fitness to study will be kept under review throughout the remaining period of study. The student’s tutor will meet them regularly to provide ongoing pastoral care and to ensure that their further support is effective.

Student Complaint

If the student is not satisfied with any decisions made following this procedure, they should invoke the college’s Grievance Procedure. The college will then follow its Grievance Procedure, nominating alternative officers for any who are conflicted (e.g. tutor or Senior Tutor). However, the college reserves the right to pursue its Fitness To Study Procedure concurrently if urgent action is deemed necessary.