

Support for Study Framework

Approved by College Council (7 Sept 2020), w.e.f. 15 Sept 2020

1. Scope and Principles

1.1. All students are expected to engage fully with their studies. They will be informed how to access relevant pastoral and academic support, and those with disabilities will be offered reasonable adjustments.

1.2. Hughes Hall addresses any need for support regarding a student's wellbeing or behaviour primarily in a tutorial context. The student's tutor takes the initial lead, working for the student's best interest, and meeting occasionally or regularly to discuss any issues and their implications. Tutors advise and support their tutees, 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)

1.3. Hughes Hall uses this Support for Study Framework when:

- A student's tutor has given normal tutorial support, yet concerns remain
- A student's health is significantly impacting their academic performance or assessment
- A student's underlying health condition may have contributed to a breach of the College's Rules of Behaviour

1.4. A tutor who is concerned that a student needs further support should liaise with the Senior Tutor and other relevant college officers on a need-to-know basis. If deemed appropriate, the Senior Tutor then initiates the Framework.

1.5. The Senior Tutor has oversight of the Framework and its enactment, and either chairs or appoints a Deputy Senior Tutor (or exceptionally another experienced tutor) to chair the process for each student.

1.6. The Senior Tutor may make an alternative proposal, e.g.

- a) Support the student in applying for intermission (or 'disregard of terms'),
- b) Refer the student to the college's Disciplinary Procedure,
- c) Refer the student to the university's Procedure to Support and Assess Ability to Study (formerly Fitness to Study Procedure) or its Fitness to Practice Procedure.

2. General Procedure

2.1. The nominated Chair oversees the Framework for the relevant student.

2.2. Everyone is expected to engage fully with this process, and to behave reasonably and respectfully. Abusive behaviour is not acceptable, and may unfortunately lead to disciplinary action separate from the Framework.

2.3. Unless urgent action is necessary, notice will be given for formal meetings of at least 4 working days. The Chair will include the student as much as possible in working to address the presenting issues but may need to continue meetings in their absence. The Chair will appoint a minute-taker, normally from the Tutorial Office, and the minutes will be circulated to all relevant parties, normally within 5 working days.

2.4. The student's tutor will be invited to meetings at all levels, and the student may also be accompanied by another supporter of their choice: a current Hughes Hall student; an advisor from an appropriate university body, e.g. UCS, DRC, SUAS; or a medical or mental health professional. The student should give notice of their name and role at least 2 working days before any meeting.

2.5. A student with a disability should inform the Chair as soon as possible of any requests for reasonable adjustments, so that these can be considered and provided where appropriate.

2.6. The Chair is responsible for gathering relevant information prior to meetings. This includes appropriate input from medical and/or mental health professionals, to be shared with relevant parties at all levels on a need-to-know basis. It may also include third-party statements, correspondence, CCTV and other digital records and anything else deemed relevant.

2.7. The Framework will normally be suspended when a student intermits or is referred to another procedure (see 1.6). However, there will normally be a further Framework meeting preceding the student's return from intermission (see 6), and there may be one following the completion of another procedure.

2.8. Exceptionally the Senior Tutor may propose to the President that immediate precautionary action be taken. This will only occur if the Senior Tutor perceives a significant risk to the student, other students or the college. The proposal may include temporarily excluding the student from college premises and/or suspending the college's responsibility for their study. In this case, the Senior Tutor initiates the Framework immediately at Level B with a Case Conference, and any precautionary action taken must then be reconsidered at its meeting. Any precautionary action taken will be limited and proportionate, and will be reviewed after 21 days.

2.9. If a student is dissatisfied with any part of the Framework process, they should first present their reasons in writing to the Framework Chair or, regarding precautionary action or the Fitness to Study Panel, to the President. If they cannot reach satisfactory resolution, the student may initiate the college's Grievance Procedure. However, the college reserves the right to proceed with any recommended action if deemed necessary in the circumstances until the Grievance Procedure reaches its conclusion.

3. Level A: Support Review

3.1. For significant or recurring concerns, the Framework Chair convenes a Support Review to be attended by the student and their tutor. The Chair consults the Nurse, the Disability Equality

Officer, and where relevant the Director of Studies or postgraduate equivalent, and may invite any of them to attend as appropriate.

3.2. The student will be informed of the purpose of the Review, including a summary of the presenting issues.

3.3. At the meeting, the Chair will ensure that the presenting issues are explained, and the student will be asked to respond. Together those involved in the Review will discuss the issues and agree supportive actions. The minutes should reflect any significantly differing perspectives. A student may disagree with aspects of the discussion yet still benefit from supportive actions.

3.4. Supportive actions should enable the student to engage more effectively with their study. Some supportive actions may need to be agreed in conjunction with the Department or Faculty as well as the student. These actions may include:

- Additional meetings to discuss behaviour or academic work
- Additional study skills, mentoring, interim deadlines, practice exams
- Engagement with disability support, counselling or other health professionals, including further assessments
- Review of reasonable adjustments
- Specifying people with whom communication must or must not be made
- Specifying facilities or buildings which must or must not be used

3.5. The list of supportive actions will be included in the meeting minutes. The student should confirm their agreement to these within 5 working days of receipt. If a student declines to agree, the Chair will consider whether to alter the list, in consultation with relevant parties, or to escalate the matter to a Case Conference.

3.6. A timescale and procedure for reviewing these supportive actions will also be included in the minutes.

3.7. A Support Review meeting may decide that support can revert to the normal tutorial level and that the Framework is no longer needed, or alternatively that the matter must be moved to a Case Conference.

4. Level B: Case Conference

4.1. For immediately serious concerns or where Level A has not been sufficiently effective, the Framework Chair convenes a Case Conference to be attended by the student and their tutor. The Chair consults the Nurse, the Disability Equality Officer, and where relevant the Director of Studies or postgraduate equivalent, and may invite any of them to attend as appropriate. If the student is unable or unwilling to attend, the Chair may proceed in their absence, but will then invite the student to provide a written statement or to arrange for their nominated supporter to attend instead (see 2.4).

4.2. A Case Conference is a significant event with potentially serious consequences, and the student may well find it stressful. All those involved recognise this and will seek to minimise stress as far as possible. The student will continue to be offered support, through their tutor or other college personnel, and information on support available elsewhere, e.g. through SUAS.

4.3. The Case Conference may propose an Action Plan of further supportive actions, including a timeframe for review and potential consequences if the plan is not kept. The student should confirm their agreement to this plan within 5 working days of receipt. If the student declines to agree, the Chair will consider whether to alter the plan, in consultation with relevant parties, or to reconvene the Case Conference, or to refer the student to the college's Fitness to Study Panel.

4.4. The Case Conference may make an alternative proposal, e.g.

- d) Support the student in applying for intermission (or 'disregard of terms')
- e) Refer the student to the college's Disciplinary Procedure
- f) Refer the student to the university's Procedure to Support and Assess Ability to Study (formerly Fitness to Study Procedure) or its Fitness to Practice Procedure.
- g) Refer the student to the college's Fitness to Study Panel to determine whether the student should be required to leave the college temporarily or permanently.

4.5. The Case Conference may also propose to the President that immediate precautionary action be taken if it perceives a significant risk to the student, other students or the college. This proposal may include temporarily excluding the student from college premises and/or suspending the college's responsibility for their study. In exceptional cases the Chair may propose precautionary action before the Case Conference, but this must then be reconsidered at the meeting. Any precautionary action taken will be limited and proportionate, and will be reviewed after 21 days.

4.6. The student will receive notification of the outcome within 5 working days, either through the minutes or by email from the Chair.

5. Level C: Fitness to Study Panel

5.1. When a Case Conference refers a student to a Fitness to Study Panel (the Panel), the Framework Chair will notify the Chair of College Council, i.e. the President, who will convene and chair the Panel (or exceptionally may appoint as chair another experienced member of Governing Body). The Panel will have 4-6 members including its chair, all of them members of Governing Body and unconflicted by significant previous involvement with the student. It will include at least:

- three members of College Council
- the Senior Tutor or a Deputy Senior Tutor (or exceptionally another experienced tutor)
- one medical doctor

Any panel member may fulfil more than one of these conditions. The Secretary to Council will act as Panel Secretary.

5.2. The Framework Chair will provide the Panel with minutes from the relevant Case Conference and any other relevant information. The Panel Chair may request further statements, written or oral, from any relevant person. The Panel Chair may also request the student to attend a consultation with a relevant specialist. If the student declines or fails to attend the consultation, the Chair may decide to proceed with the Panel meeting.

5.3. The Panel Secretary will give all parties at least 5 working days' notice of the time, venue and purpose of the meeting; will provide all parties access to the same documents; will invite the student to submit any further documentation at least 2 working days before the meeting; and will then provide access to this documentation to the other parties.

5.4. The student may request to be accompanied by their tutor and another supporter as specified at 2.4. The student should give notice of their name and role at least 2 working days before any meeting and they will be given access to the same documents as the Panel. If the student is unable or unwilling to attend the meeting, the Panel Chair may decide to proceed in their absence but will then invite the student to provide a further written statement or to arrange for their supporter to attend instead.

5.5. The Panel will make its decision regarding the student's fitness to study on the basis of evidence and the balance of probabilities. The 'burden of proof' rests with the college. The Panel has authority delegated from College Council for all decisions, including those noted in Statute IX.4. Its decision will be one of the following:

- a. To suspend the student temporarily from the college, specifying the period which must elapse and/or any conditions which must be met before an application to resume study may be made.
- b. To deprive the student of college membership and exclude them permanently.
- c. To refer the case for consideration under a different college or university procedure.
- d. To make any other recommendation(s) including continued support at Framework Level B.

5.6. The Secretary will notify the student in writing of the Panel's decision and reasons within 5 working days of the meeting.

5.7. If the student is dissatisfied with the Panel's decision, they may initiate the college's Grievance Procedure. The Grievance Procedure is the final stage of the college's internal procedures. Along with its ruling, it will therefore issue a Completion of Procedures letter directing the student to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if they remain dissatisfied.

6. Returning to Study

6.1. Return to study after any medical intermission requires satisfactory medical evidence of a student's fitness to resume study and, where necessary, the availability of suitable support on their return. The evidence of fitness to return is normally provided by the medical practitioner who had previously provided evidence for intermission. The college nurse will also normally meet the student prior to their return. The college must be satisfied with the medical evidence before supporting a request to the appropriate university body for the student's return to study.

6.2. A Case Conference will consider the application to return from any student who intermitted for medical reasons (whether initiated through the Framework or otherwise) and for any intermission under 5.5.a above. The Case Conference may decide:

- a) To permit the student to resume study, subject to approval from the relevant university body and in accordance with any specified conditions or supportive measures made by the college or the university.
- b) To refuse the request to resume study, and to specify the period which must elapse and/or any conditions which must be met before any further application may be made.
- c) To refer the case to the University's Procedure to Support and Assess Ability to Study (formerly Fitness to Study) or its Fitness to Practice Procedure.

6.3. Where a Case Conference specifies conditions, it will arrange to monitor the student's compliance and to address any alleged breach. Where a Case Conference proposes supportive measures, it will arrange to monitor their provision and to address any shortfall.

6.4. If a student is dissatisfied with the Case Conference's decision, they should first present their reasons in writing to the Chair. If they cannot reach satisfactory resolution, the student may initiate the college's Grievance Procedure. However, the college reserves the right to proceed with any decision until the Grievance Procedure reaches its conclusion.

6.5. It is the ongoing responsibility of the returning student to maintain their ability to study, though the college will provide appropriate support. The student will remain within the Framework process at Level A or B until they have demonstrated to the Chair's satisfaction that they no longer need this. Throughout the Framework and beyond, their tutor will continue to provide pastoral care and to ensure that any further support is effective.

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