Notes for members of staff attending Faculty Student Review Committees

These notes have been prepared to assist members of staff in academic departments who have the responsibility for preparing a case to be considered by the Faculty Student Review Committee. The notes also cover procedures in advance of and on the day of the Committee meeting and it is hoped that the information provided will be of help to those staff who attend as a representative of their department/school.

Prior to the Meeting

• Following a referral of a student’s case to the Faculty Student Review Committee (FSRC), preparations will be put in train to arrange a meeting. Every attempt is made to arrange this as quickly as possible, but delays are sometimes unavoidable.

• A representative from the relevant academic Department/School is requested to prepare a written submission for consideration by the Committee. This member of staff will be invited to attend the FSRC but in the event that they are unable to do so, a member of staff equally familiar with the principles of the case should present the case.

• Where a member of staff is preparing the departmental case and/or is to attend the meeting, it is important that they be familiar with the case but inappropriate for them to be the student’s personal tutor. In preparing the case, it is important that the intended outcome for the School or Department is clear. In almost every case of referral to the FSRC, this will be a recommendation that the student be excluded from further study. A well-prepared case will include background information on the structure of the relevant programme of study, a summary chronology of events relating to the case, and additional supporting documentation (such as a list of results, extracts from departmental handbooks, School or tutor records, etc) providing evidence relating to the specific Regulation(s) under which the student has been referred to the Committee.

• Once Committee members are selected, notification is sent to the student listing the members and providing an opportunity for the student to raise any objections. The student is asked to confirm their attendance and any representation (for example, a legally qualified representative must be made known at this point) and to provide any supporting statement and documentation that may be relevant. The student is also asked to give their permission for the Student Engagement and Progress team to discuss details relating to their case with an advisor if one is identified.

• It should be noted that student advisors within the Student Advice Centre are very experienced in the preparation of progress cases and are meticulous in their research and presentation of the relevant facts. The Department/School’s case also needs to be robust and presented without ambiguity. (Please note that a departmental representative may be supported at the hearing by a colleague). Issues that may be addressed during a hearing include the student’s full academic record, aspects of their pastoral support, any record of absences or medical certification and other pertinent facts. However, the case should centre around the grounds on which the student was first reported to the Faculty without any new concerns being raised.

• The Chair, Committee members, student and Departmental/School representative are provided - in advance - with a complete set of papers for the FSRC. Copies are also made available for the student’s advisor, if any. Where a Departmental/School representative wishes to ask that additional items be tabled at the start of the meeting, which might be necessary in relation to matters raised in the student’s written submission or for further clarification, it is helpful if staff could bring sufficient copies.
On the day

- The Chair, Committee members and secretary will meet briefly to ensure that all members are clear as to the relevant details of the case and the duties required of them.

- The student (and advisor if applicable) will be asked to wait in a specified area.

- The Departmental/School representative will also be asked to wait (normally separately from the student, space permitting).

- Once the Chair is satisfied that the Committee members are fully briefed, the secretary will take a final opportunity to speak to the parties waiting and clarify seating arrangements, etc. upon entering the room. The secretary will then invite BOTH the student and any advisor AND the Departmental/School representative to enter the Committee room together. This ensures that both parties meet with the Committee at the same time.

- The Chair will begin the meeting by introducing the Committee members and clarifying with everyone the purpose and sequence of the meeting as set out in the 'Notes on the procedure of Committees concerned with the academic progress of students'. These notes are included in the papers for the meeting. Additionally, at this point the Chair will ask the student if he/she wishes to request an adjournment.

- Throughout the meeting, the secretary will take detailed notes of the discussion. These are not written up as formal minutes, but retained in a file, for record purposes.

- The meeting begins with the Departmental/School representative being asked to explain briefly the reasoning behind the student being reported through the Progress of Student Regulations, referencing the circulated papers whenever appropriate. The Committee members, student and Chair may take this opportunity to present questions. The Departmental representative should expect questions at this point, and should be sufficiently well briefed in the details of the student's case and their course to enable authoritative answers to be given.

- Next, the student and/or student's advisor, will be invited to make a response (effectively a defence case), referencing the circulated papers whenever appropriate. As above, the student may be presented with questions at this stage.

- Once all parties have been given the opportunity to present their case, the Chair and Committee members will take a final opportunity to address any outstanding issues that may be relevant to the final decision.

- At the close of this stage of the proceedings, the Chair will ensure that all parties are satisfied that all issues have been properly addressed. If so, the student (and any advisor), and the Departmental/School representative will be asked to leave the Committee room. The Committee will then reach a decision in the absence of all parties except the secretary. No new information is introduced at this point.

- It is not necessary for the student to wait until the Committee has completed their discussions, since the decision will be communicated in writing. If however, the student has waited, it is the practice in certain Faculties that the Chair may orally inform him/her of the Committee's decision.

Any queries relating to the above notes should be addressed to the Student Engagement and Progress Team (sas.engagement.progress@sheffield.ac.uk) in Student Support Services.