



Fitness to Study Procedure

There are three stages to our Fitness to Study procedure. At each stage, specialist staff work together to ensure students receive the best possible level of support to succeed in all areas of University life.

- [Stage One: Initial Case Consideration Meetings](#)
- [Stage Two: Support Package Meetings](#)
- [Stage Three: Regulation \(26\) Meetings](#)

Stage One: Initial Case Consideration Meetings

Students who might benefit from a discussion of their circumstances and needs can be referred to an initial case consideration meeting. This referral can be made by a support service, at the request of an academic department or by the student themselves.

These meetings are held fortnightly and attended by Student Support Services staff. Staff from academic departments, residences or others may also be invited.

Aims

- Consider the range of support/options that the student has/could have.
- To ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered in all areas of the University.
- To put in place co-ordinated and holistic packages of support for all relevant students, and consider progressing to stage 2 particularly where this can help manage crisis or improve the experience of the student and the staff supporting them.

Format

- 1) The student will be asked to give their express consent to have their case discussed by signing the "Support Packages for Students with Mental Health Difficulties: Consent to Share Information" form.
- 2) Members may wish to discuss anonymous cases about which there is serious concern. There may be occasions where some services believe that their duty of care requires a discussion without permission.
- 3) Where there **is** permission to name the student, the referring service will email the members in advance naming the student they will be discussing/bringing to the meeting. If some members feel it is inappropriate to attend, they will absent themselves/withdraw.
- 4) Where there is **not** permission to name the student, services whose policies/duty of care permit disclosure will still carry out 3) above.
- 5) Where the process is progressing to Stage 2:
 - The student will be invited to attend the meeting at stage 2 if they wish.
 - The co-ordinator may also offer to meet with the student to determine their views, wishes and needs.

Stage Two: Support Package Meetings

Support Services and departments work together as appropriate to agree what support will be helpful for the student.

Aims

- Agree expected engagement with the package.
- Set review schedule if appropriate (to be led by co-ordinator).
- Establish remit, responsibilities, and boundaries for all concerned.
- Explore the best (as defined by specialist staff) options for support.

Format

- 1) The meeting is set up by the co-ordinator (from Stage 1) with membership agreed with the student.
- 2) In some cases, the student will be present to set up a support package.
- 3) Where the student is to attend, the staff involved in the meeting will convene 15 minutes before the student's arrival to agree boundaries and ground rules.
- 4) Where a student has received information and advice about support packages but chooses not to engage at this stage, the referrer will inform the next meeting.
- 5) Once in place, the support package will be reviewed as scheduled or at the request of support staff/the student.

In exceptional cases, if the appropriate support and reasonable adjustments agreed at this stage are not successful, referral to Stage 3 will be considered.

Stage Three: Regulation (26) Meetings

Usually, the team will have previously engaged with/about a student at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 before reaching Stage 3. Where a case is considered urgent it is referred to Stage 3 directly.

In some cases, a case conference might be held prior to or instead of the full Regulation 26 meeting.

Case Conference Meeting

A case conference meeting is held where the relevant support services think that having all parties together (which may or may not include the student) will:

- Clarify the full picture.
- Enable those present to better understand roles, remits, boundaries, options.
- Allow all parties to reach a shared understanding of the student's support needs.
- Provide an opportunity to avoid a Regulation 26 Meeting if the group think that the student might be able to engage better with support and/or fuller information would enable them to provide more appropriate support.

This is not a necessary stage before a Regulation 26 Meeting, but this meeting will be considered as a possible or probable next step.

Regulation 26 Meetings

A Regulation 26 Meeting is held to decide whether it should be recommended to the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) that a student be required to take a Leave of Absence (LOA) or withdraw because, for

health reasons, "it is not in their interest or that of the university that the applicant should begin or the student should continue a programme of study".

- The options of deferral, LOA or withdrawal are always presented to a student prior to this stage, with a discussion if the student is willing to engage.
- Regulation 26 will only be considered where a student is unwilling to defer, take LOA (on medical grounds) or withdraw.
- Relevant evidence, such as medical evidence and/or opinion, is considered at the meeting.

Format of the Meeting

- 1) The student is invited to meet with the relevant support staff in advance of the meeting to discuss the purpose and possible outcomes of the meeting.
- 2) The student can write written evidence prior to the meeting.
- 3) Support staff, academic faculty representatives and any other specialists attend.

Careful consideration is given to:

- Disability legislation
 - The support offered
 - Medical and other evidence
 - University Equality and Diversity policy
 - The impact of behaviours on other students and on staff
 - What reasonable adjustments might enable a student to be fit to study
 - Any submission made by the student, including any new medical evidence
 - The likelihood of academic progress in the current situation and in the future
 - What reasonable and appropriate support might enable a student to be fit to study The student's current health and presentation plus any advice about prognosis should they remain in the University
- 4) Alternative next steps to Regulation 26 are considered, such as progress review or disciplinary route.
 - 5) If it is generally agreed that Regulation 26 should be invoked, the chair recommends this to the PVC.
 - 6) If the PVC accepts, the student is deferred, withdrawn or placed on LOA. The student still has the option to request deferral, withdrawal or LOA at this point.