

FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY

1 Purpose and Scope

This Policy is intended to be used as an alternative to any disciplinary procedure where there is sufficient concern that a student's behaviour resulting in a possible disciplinary response could be as a result of disability, ill health or have an impact on the Health and Safety of the student or other people. Any decisions made on a student's fitness to study will be made through a collective process of consideration of the ability to study, learn and complete their course of study. Academic and support staff may initiate use of the procedure if concern for the student is sufficient. It may be that there are similar concerns in other sections of the College community that may be collected together by use of this process. It is important that all those sections of the College with whom the student is in regular interaction are kept fully informed of the outcome of these processes, whilst keeping in mind the legitimate concerns around confidentiality, data protection and professional guidelines. This Policy may also be applied if there are concerns about a student pre-admission to the College which may result in refusal of a place on application.

Consultation with the Assistant Principal – HR & Student Services would be recommended.

Staff should be aware of other support services in the College to which students may be signposted if it is felt this may be of benefit in advance of any procedure being initiated.

The procedure has 3 levels based on the perceived level of risk to the Health and Safety of the student or others posed by the behaviour, or health, of a student caused by ill-health or disability. The cause for concern can result in entering the procedure at any of the 3 levels, stay at a level, or can progress through the levels should the cause for concern not be remedied by recommended and agreed actions resulting from a meeting at Level 1 or 2.

Staff who have any level of concern about a student's health or behaviour should consider use of this procedure. If there is a concern of this nature, it is appropriate to explore the student's health/behaviour and agree supportive action rather than enter into a disciplinary procedure. If staff are unsure about whether to implement this procedure, they can seek advice and discuss their concerns anonymously and in general terms with the Assistant Principal – HR & Student Services, the Student Life Manager or the Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisor.

Concerns about a student's health/behaviour should be acted on promptly. If there is any level of concern, staff should discuss this with support services and consider implementing Level 1 of the procedure. Early intervention in student health/behaviour and recommendations for support can avoid a crisis situation.

Instances where it may be appropriate to use fitness to study include, but are not limited to:

- A student has an ongoing issue with physical or mental health which is impacting attendance and progress. Because of these health concerns disciplinary procedures are not appropriate.
- There may be a number of third party reports about a student, from friends, housemates, placement provider, employer etc. These again may be an indication that there is a need to address;

- A student has not engaged with study for a period of time without reason given. Absence may be a cause for concern, and staff should be aware of the wellbeing of students who are on programmes of study at the College as absence is often an indication that there is a possible need to address;
- The student has told a member of staff they have a problem which questions their fitness to study.

Level 1

- 1.1 Emerging concerns about an individual's Health and Safety and ability to study, e.g. significant deterioration in health, appearance, attitude and/or behaviour might require a response from the College.
- 1.2 A member of staff with primary responsibility (e.g. Student Mentor or Lecturer) should in the first instance approach the student in a sympathetic and understanding way, and indicate that there are concerns about fitness to study and that a concern has been registered by use of this procedure.
- 1.3 The nature of the concerns should be clearly identified and, if appropriate, information should be provided about sources of professional support and advice available within the College. It should be made clear to the student that it is their responsibility to be fit to study, and that there is a recognised concern about this within the College.
- 1.4 The student and the member of staff involved should agree on a date when they will meet to review the situation and discuss what is being done to address the concern about fitness to study. This discussion should be recorded and communicated to the student.
- 1.5 A record of the discussion should be sent to the student no more than 5 working days after the meeting has taken place. A copy may be sent to a parent or next of kin if the student is under 18. A copy of this should be sent to the Assistant Principal – HR & Student Services.
- 1.6 The student should be informed that continuation of the same, or any additional cause for concern, could result in their fitness to study being more widely considered by moving to Level 2.
- 1.7 Any records of meetings held at this level should be held centrally and for the academic year in which they took place, or for the duration of the study programme.

Level 2

- 2.1 Continued/initial concern about an individual's Health and Safety and ability to study that is a significant deterioration in health, appearance, attitude and/or behaviour might require a response further/initial response from the College, and should be seen as a Level 2 case under the procedure.
- 2.2 The student will need to be invited to attend a meeting with the Curriculum Manager. The student should be informed of the purpose of the meeting, and advised of any documents they may need to bring. The student may be accompanied at the meeting by a Grantham College Student Union representative,

friend or family member, acting in a supportive capacity.

Disabled students may also be accompanied by a support worker as appropriate to their needs. For students under 18 a parent or next of kin should be invited. There may be occasions when the Student is unable/unwilling to attend the meeting personally, due to illness or mental health issues – these meetings will still take place, ensuring that a parent/carer is present.

- 2.3 The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain the student's perception of the issue(s) identified. A clear, written statement from the member of staff calling the meeting should be sent to the student at least 48 hours before the meeting.
- 2.4 During the meeting, it is important to identify and agree with the student an Action Plan to observe following the meeting. The consequences, if any, (a) of not keeping to the agreed actions, or (b) continuation of the causes for concern, must be clearly outlined to the student. A record of the meeting, recording actions agreed, must be made with a copy sent to the student no more than 5 working days after the meeting and with a copy kept on file. Regular review meetings with students should be arranged to ensure that support for study is effective.
- 2.5 A report of the meeting and its outcomes will be recorded by the Curriculum Manager and copied to the Assistant Principal – HR and Student Services.

Level 3

- 3.1 Serious or persistent concerns about an individual's Health and Safety and ability to study, personal circumstances, or behaviour that have not been resolved via Level 2 will cause Level 3 to be initiated. Initial concerns that a student's behaviour, caused by ill-health or disability, may pose a significant threat to the Health and Safety of the student or others and can lead to Level 3 being initiated without reference to Levels 1 and 2.
- 3.2 An urgent call to the Assistant Principal – HR & Student Services will probably result in a Level 3 consideration of the circumstances.
- 3.3 A case conference will be called by the Assistant Principal – HR & Student Services to discuss the most appropriate course of action.
- 3.4 The case conference, Chaired by the Assistant Principal – HR & Student Services or their representative, will include representatives from the curriculum area, Student Mentor and relevant support.
- 3.5 The student will also be invited to attend, and may be accompanied by a Grantham College Student Union representative, friend, or family member. If the student is under 18 a parent or next of kin should attend. There may be occasions when the Student is unable/unwilling to attend the meeting personally, due to illness or mental health issues – these meetings will still take place, ensuring that a parent/carer is present.
- 3.6 Invitations to the case conference should be delivered at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting, and include a request that attendance should be notified to the College.
- 3.7 The contribution of representatives will be subject to Data Protection legislation

and/or professional codes of confidentiality (e.g. for medical/counselling staff).

- 3.8 The case conference may consider various options, including part-time study with support, a period of interruption or a recommendation for withdrawal of the student.
- 3.9 The actions arising out of the case conference will be agreed, documented and circulated to all in attendance and to the student, if not in attendance. All actions should have specific timeframes where appropriate, and adherence to such timeframes will be a condition of any re-entry to programmes of study. These will be reviewed by the Assistant Principal – Services for Students.
- 3.10 A letter will be written to the student by the within 48 hours of the meeting to confirm agreed outcomes/actions.
- 3.11 If withdrawal is the outcome, it must be reported to the Principal.
- 3.12 Any interruption of study will be subject to review by the Assistant Principal – HR & Student Services in the light of developments with reports, as appropriate, to the Principal. Any written representations made by the student, or someone acting on his/her behalf, will be made to the Principal.
- 3.13 Such a review will include consideration of medical evidence from the individual's medical practitioner, and assessment from relevant College personnel.
- 3.14 A letter outlining the decisions of the review should be written by the Assistant Principal – HR & Student Services and sent to the student by recorded delivery mail.

4 Returning to Study

- 4.1 Students should be informed of the purpose of the procedure and the responsibilities on the part of the College and themselves on facilitating effective return to study.
- 4.2 Each student's case will depend upon the specific circumstances and context out of which the concern initially arose, but in all cases return to study will be dependent upon satisfactory medical evidence of fitness to study and the provision of information about appropriate support services, with a recommendation of the benefit of continuing to study with support. Evidence submitted should be from a recognised health professional who has sufficient knowledge of the student to be able to make an informed statement of wellbeing. Specific reference should be made to the student's renewed ability to manage the demands of studying at College.
- 4.3 The decision to permit return to study will be made by the Assistant Principal – HR & Student Services who will be satisfied of fitness to study, compliance with any conditions imposed and availability of support upon return.
- 4.4 Fitness to study is an on-going responsibility of the College and the student, and will be considered throughout the remaining period of study to ensure that students study with support to enable them to succeed and for staff to have an agreed context in which to work with the student. Regular review meetings with students

should be arranged with a College contact to ensure that support for study is effective.

5 Right of Appeal

- 5.1 Students and prospective students have the right of appeal within 5 working days. If a student is refused admission on the grounds of fitness to study they should use the appropriate procedure within the Admissions Policy.
- 5.2 If a student wishes to appeal about the outcomes of the Level 3 intervention or their withdrawal from the College, they should address their appeal, in writing, to the Principal where decision will be final.

Linked Policies/Procedures:

- Admissions Policy
- Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Quality Assurance			
Review Period:	Annually	Review carried out by:	Dave Ferguson – Student Mentor
Approved by:	SLT	Date approved:	29.11.17
Equality Impact Assessment date:	16 th Nov 17	Last review date:	16.11.17

FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURE RECORD OF CONCERN FOR A STUDENT'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING

STUDENT'S NAME:	Mr/Mrs/Miss/ Ms/Other	Surname	First Name
ID NUMBER:			
ADDRESS:			
DATE OF BIRTH:			
GENDER (Please ✓):	MALE	FEMALE	
TELEPHONE/ CONTACT DETAILS:	MOBILE:	HOME:	
E-MAIL ADDRESS:			

Level 1. Undertaken by A member of staff with primary responsibility (e.g. Student Mentor or Lecturer) with the approval of the Curriculum Manager.	
People Present: (Names and Designation)	
BRIEF OUTLINE OF CONCERN:	
FEEDBACK FOLLOWING MEETING WITH STUDENT:	
AGREED ACTION POINTS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 	
Date:	Review Date:
Review 1.	
People Present: (Names and Designation)	

STAFF/STUDENT POLICIES

Notes:	
ACTION POINTS 1. 2. 3. 4.	Achieved Yes/No
New Action Points 1. 2. 3. 4.	
Date	Review Date

Review 2.	
People Present: (Names and Designation)	
Notes:	
ACTION POINTS 1. 2. 3. 4.	Achieved Yes/No
New Action Points 1. 2. 3. 4.	
Date	Review Date

If further reviews are needed copy and paste and renumber from above

Level 2 The student will need to be invited to attend a meeting with the Curriculum Manager	
People Present: (Names and Designation)	
BRIEF OUTLINE OF CONCERN AT PRESENT TIME:	
FEEDBACK FOLLOWING MEETING WITH STUDENT:	
AGREED ACTION POINTS 1. 2. 3. 4.	
Date:	Review Date

Review 1.	
People Present: (Names and Designation)	
Notes:	
ACTION POINTS 1. 2. 3. 4.	Achieved Yes/No
New Action Points 1. 2. 3. 4.	
Date:	Review Date:

Review 2.	
People Present: (Names and Designation)	
Notes:	
ACTION POINTS 1. 2. 3. 4.	Achieved Yes/No
New Action Points 1. 2. 3. 4.	
Date:	Review Date

If further reviews are needed copy and paste and renumber from above

Level 3. Case Conference with Assistant Principal – Services to Students.	
People Present: (Names and Designation)	
BRIEF OUTLINE OF CONCERN AT PRESENT TIME:	
FEEDBACK FOLLOWING MEETING WITH STUDENT:	
AGREED ACTION POINTS 1. 2. 3. 4.	
Date:	Review Date:

Review 1.	
People Present: (Names and Designation)	
Notes:	
ACTION POINTS 1. 2. 3. 4.	Achieved Yes/No
New Action Points 1. 2. 3. 4.	
Date:	Review Date:

Review 2.	
People Present: (Names and Designation)	
Notes:	
ACTION POINTS 5. 6. 7. 8.	Achieved Yes/No
New Action Points 5. 6. 7. 8.	
Date:	Review Date:

If further reviews are needed copy and paste and renumber from above

DECLARATION:

I understand the nature of the concern(s) raised by the College, 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 College, to which I belong.

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

Whilst I understand that the College 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.

Student's Name:

Signature:

Staff Member:

Signature:

Date: