

# Support to Study Procedure



## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Where a student is finding their course or university life challenging because their mental or physical health is compromised; or because of a disability; or due to adverse life events. The University uses this procedure to ensure students receive appropriate and helpful academic and wellbeing support measures to enable them to thrive at University.
- 1.2 This procedure is intended to provide an effective, practical and accessible framework through an action planning approach, to support students where circumstances are having an adverse impact on their studies, (or in the case of new students, likely to do so) or are impacting on the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of others.
- 1.3 This procedure adheres to the principles outlined in the OIA (Office of the Independent Adjudicator) good practice framework for supporting disabled students: accessibility; clarity; proportionality; timeliness; fairness; independence; confidentiality; and improving the student experience<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4 Students are responsible for the management of their own wellbeing wherever possible and the aim of staff throughout is to support and enable the student in a collaborative manner. However, where a student is unable or unwilling to cooperate in the management of their wellbeing, this procedure makes provision for proceeding without input from the student.

## 2. Initiating the Procedure

- 2.1 This procedure is used for all BSU students and includes:
  - a. Students who are not attending, submitting work and repeatedly not responding to University contact;
  - b. Students with complex circumstances;
  - c. New students with pre-existing conditions or complex life circumstances who require enhanced support to enable their transition to University;
  - d. Students who regularly submit exceptional circumstances applications as a result of ongoing health concerns;
  - e. Students whose health, wellbeing and behaviour is causing concern or having an adverse effect on others, including where there has been a perceived significant change in a student's personality or attitude;
  - f. Students whose behaviour is affecting the health and safety of other people;
  - g. Where a student is unable or unwilling to cooperate in the management of their wellbeing.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/1039/oia-good-practice-framework-supporting-disabled-students.pdf>

## 2.2 Structure of the Procedure

This procedure has two levels and depending on the level of support required, action may be initiated at any stage:

- Level 1 – when there are emerging concerns about a student’s health, wellbeing and/or behaviour and the impact this is having on their academic engagement or on others.
- Level 2 – when there are continued or enhanced concerns about a student’s health, wellbeing, behaviour, impact on others, or other concerns affecting their ability to function within the University.

If a student is not deemed able to be supported under the Support to Study procedure because of a potential serious risk to themselves or others; or because of an inability to engage with their studies or the Support to Study procedure, the University reserves the right to refer the student to the Fitness to Study Procedure and to contact the student’s designated emergency person. The University also reserves the right to refer students to the Fitness to Study Procedure where there has been an actual or potential breach of the student standards requirements for professionally regulated courses.

## 2.3 Initiating Support to Study

Support to Study is initiated by Student Wellbeing Services in consultation with an appropriate member of academic staff e.g., academic advisor, head of course, supervisor (for research programmes).

## 3. Support to Study Level 1 – Emerging Concern

3.1 Level 1 is used when there are emerging concerns about a student’s health, wellbeing and/or behaviour and the impact this is having on their academic engagement or on others.

3.2 The SWS staff member (the Lead Person) (see 2.3) in consultation with appropriate colleagues should:

- a. Collate relevant information on the issue/s and concerns;
- b. Clarify what action has been taken so far and whether anyone has discussed and/or been in contact with the student;
- c. Maintain a case record;
- d. Provide guidance to the student and other relevant staff members.

3.3 The Lead Person should contact the student in a sensitive and understanding way to arrange a time to meet, explaining that it is because of concerns raised in relation to their health, wellbeing and/or studies. A copy of the Support to

Study Procedure will be given to the student in advance of the meeting, and explanation that StS is designed to be a supportive process.

- 3.4 Level 1 meetings should be informal, informative, and welcoming; only staff members deemed to be essential to the meeting should attend (in many cases this will just be the Lead Person from Student Wellbeing Services) to ensure the student does not find it intimidating. The student can bring a friend, family member or SU member if they would like additional support in the meeting. The student should be informed which staff members will be present and why.
- 3.5 The meeting should be held in a private space and the points in Appendix One should be considered and included as appropriate.
- 3.6 The StSAP (Support to Study Action Plan) is written by the Lead Person and shared with the student within 5 working days after the meeting has taken place (Appendix Two).
- 3.7 The student should review the StSAP; agree to any amendments with the Lead Person and email to confirm they agree with the StSAP.
- 3.8 If the student does not agree with the StSAP, a further meeting will be arranged to discuss any queries, including the Lead Person's line-manager. As the StSAP is intended to be a supportive measure, the aim is to reach agreement through discussion and negotiation. If agreement cannot be reached go to 3.11.
- 3.9 The Level 1 StSAP review meeting should take place within 4 weeks of the initial meeting and include:
  - a. Review of how the student has been managing since the first meeting and if recommended actions have been achieved;
  - b. Explanation/exploration of any further concerns;
  - c. Discussion of additional adjustments or ongoing support that may be helpful.
- 3.10 Outcomes from level 1 review are:
  - a. No follow up action required as the student no longer needs to be supported under a StSAP;
  - b. An updated StSAP is agreed with the student with a subsequent review meeting within 4-6 weeks;
  - c. Referral by the Lead Person to Level 2 of this Procedure.
- 3.11 If the student fails to engage either by non-attendance at the meeting or by demonstrating no commitment to the action plan, the Lead Person should escalate the case to Level 2 of this Procedure.

#### 4. Support to Study Level 2 – Enhanced Concern

- 4.1 Level 2 is used where there are continued or enhanced concerns about the student's health, wellbeing or behaviour, impact on others, or other concerns affecting their ability to function within the University and is instigated:
- a. Where action agreed under Level 1 does not resolve the concerns or where a student fails to engage with the StSAP;
  - b. As a direct referral to Level 2 where there are enhanced or more significant concerns for the wellbeing of the student or other members of the University community.
- 4.2 The Lead Person should discuss the student's circumstances with their line manager and/or the Deputy Head of Student Wellbeing Services, or nominee. If appropriate and following advice, the Lead Person may convene a Support to Study Review Meeting (StSRM) to review the concerns. It is also possible, depending on the circumstances, to escalate directly to the Fitness to Study Procedure.
- 4.3 The StSRM should include the student (who may be accompanied by someone in a supportive capacity, for example a SU advisor) and usually two or more of the following:
- a. The Course Leader, or appropriate senior member of academic staff, The Lead Person from Level 1 – if the case has been initiated at Level 2 the Lead Person should draft the StSAP;
  - b. A representative from a relevant student service – Accessibility Advisor, Mental Health Advisor, Student and Registry Service Advisor.
- 4.4 The student is to be informed of the meeting and its purpose in a clear, written statement from the Lead Person, at least 2 working days in advance (Appendix Three).
- 4.5 The meeting should be held in a private space and the points in Appendix One should be considered and included as appropriate.
- 4.6 Outcomes from Level 2 review are:
- a. No follow up action required;
  - b. Continue at Level 2 (i.e., agreement for a further review of progress and action plan within 4 weeks);
  - c. Referral to Fitness to Study.
- 4.7 If the student fails to engage either by non-attendance at the meeting or by demonstrating no commitment to the action plan, the Lead Person should initiate the Fitness to Study Procedure.

## 5. Serious Concern

- 5.1 If concerns about a student have not been resolved by the actions in Level 2 of this procedure, or a student's behaviour raises serious and immediate concern, the member of staff identifying the concerns should inform the Head of Student Wellbeing Services (or delegate).
- 5.2 The Head of Student Wellbeing Services (or delegate), in collaboration with other relevant staff will undertake a risk assessment to assess the level of risk to the student's safety and/or wellbeing and/or others. In addition to the student's course related activities, their level of engagement with their studies should be considered alongside their personal circumstances.
- 5.3 The risk assessment will have two possible outcomes:
  - a. The level of risk is considered to be acceptable by the University and can be managed by following Level 2;
  - b. The level of risk to the student and/or others is considered unacceptable by the University. The Fitness to Study procedure will then be initiated.

## 6. Return to Study Process

- 6.1 When a student decides to take a study break under a Support to Study Action Plan, the procedure for a return to study should be explained to the student at the time of the decision being made.
- 6.2 The student will need to provide appropriate evidence to show that progress has been made in relation to the situation or issue that resulted in a study break, and they are fit to return to study. They will also need to complete the 'self-assessment form' (Appendix Four). The type of supporting evidence will depend on the situation, but usually this will be from an independent professional, with sufficient knowledge about the health and wellbeing of the student during the study break and the potential impact that returning to University may have.
- 6.3 Return to Study requests will be reviewed by the Head and Deputy Head of Student Wellbeing Services, Senior Progression Officer, and the Lead Person, in consultation with other staff where appropriate.
- 6.4 If there are concerns about whether a student is well enough to return to study the student will be referred to the Fitness to Study Procedure.

## Appendix One

### Guidance for interactions:

- Identification/explanation of the concern being raised – clear examples should be given and any past relevant information;
- Opportunity for the student to give their perspective on the situation;
- Clarification of whether this has happened before, if so, what previously was helpful;
- Clarification of relevant University boundaries and regulations, e.g., Academic Regulations, code of conduct;
- Clarification of the student's personal responsibility, such as to be well enough to study and to be respectful of others;
- Consideration of any risk to the student, their studies and to others;
- Active signposting to University Support Services that may be helpful;
- Agreement of actions and options to enable the student, e.g., extended deadline/s, other reasonable adjustments, referral to SWS, a short break;
- Agreement of a date within 2-4 weeks to review progress and the situation and who needs to be present;
- Explain to the student that it will be recorded on their student file (including E-vision) that they have a StSAP (support to study action plan) in place. Students should be reassured this is to ensure staff are able to respond appropriately to the student – the StSAP is removed following the conclusion of this Procedure.

Appendix Two  
 Support to Study Action Plan

Name of student	
Student number	
Summary of concerns or areas where the student needs additional support and/or reasonable adjustments (Include any potential risk relating to academic progression and/or health and wellbeing)	
What measures are already in place (Include internal and external support)	
Actions for the student– be specific and include timeframe/s	
Actions for the University – be specific and include timeframe/s	
Agreed date for review	
Plan to be shared with – state name and position	

## Appendix Three

### Template: Level 2, Support to Study Review Meeting Invite

[Please amend the template as appropriate]

Dear xxxxxx

Bath Spa University is committed to enabling all students to fulfil their potential and takes its duty of care to all members of the University community seriously. The Support to Study Procedure (link) provides a framework to ensure early intervention where concern is raised about a student's mental or physical health and the effect this may be having on the student or others.

#### *Amend as necessary*

- [As the concerns have not been resolved following Level 1 and the agreed Support to Study Action Plan, this email is to inform you that Level 2 of the Support to Study procedure is now being followed and you are asked to attend a Support to Study Review Meeting on xxxxx, in xxxxx.]
- [This email is to let you know that significant concerns have been raised about your wellbeing and you are invited to a Support to Study Review Meeting on xxxxx, in xxxxx. This meeting represents Level 2 of the Support to Study Procedure.]

You are welcome to bring a friend or a Students' Union representative with you to the meeting in a supportive capacity ([su-advice@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:su-advice@bathspa.ac.uk)). Xxxxx (Course Leader or other appropriate academic staff member) and xxxxx (Student Wellbeing Services staff member) will also be at the meeting, to help ensure we are able to review all the options available to you.]

The meeting will be private and any personal information relating to your health will only be shared with those staff who are directly involved in the Support to Study Review Meeting.

Please make every effort to attend this meeting, even if it requires you to miss a taught session.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

*Kind regards*

xxxxxxxxxx

## Appendix Four

### Support to Study Procedure: Self-assessment for students requesting to return to study



The information you provide in this form will help to inform the decision about your request to return to study.

If you have any questions about this form or the return to study assessment process, please contact: Sara Gallagher, Head of Student Wellbeing Services, [s.gallagher@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:s.gallagher@bathspa.ac.uk)

If you need assistance completing the self-assessment form please contact your Students' Union Advice Service [su-advice@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:su-advice@bathspa.ac.uk) or Student Wellbeing Services via [MyWellbeing](#)

Student name	
Date of birth	
Student id number	
Course	
Student consent	I agree to my GP/other relevant medical/health professional providing Bath Spa University with a medical/health assessment of my fitness to resume my studies; both using this form and through follow-up communication (if required).
Please sign if you give your consent:	

Please can you comment on and describe in as much detail as possible what factors – in your view – contributed to you taking a break from University. Please ensure you include details of any pre-existing condition (if relevant to you) along with any specific factors or challenging life events that impacted on you.

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Please can you describe your current assessment of your state of health/mental health/condition? Can you explain what measures you have taken during your break from University in preparation for resuming your studies? Please include details of any medical and non-medical interventions (including medication and other treatments where appropriate) you have engaged with. Can you also comment on how effective these interventions have been in promoting your recovery, or not.

Given the pressures of studying a demanding course and studying (and possibly living) in close proximity with other students, what measures will you take to ensure a successful return?

What suggestions do you have in terms of support from the University that might assist you in a successful return?

## Document Details

**Responsible Office:** Student Wellbeing Services / Student Experience

**Responsible Officer:** Head of Student Wellbeing Services

**Approving Authority:** Academic Board

**Date of latest approval:** November 2022

**Effective Date:** November 2022

**Related Policies and Procedures:**

Academic and Student Policies and Procedures  
<https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/>

Mental Health Framework

Student Disciplinary Procedure

Bath Spa University Privacy Notice

Fitness to Study Procedure

Safeguarding Policy

Data Protection Policy

**Supersedes:**

**Next review due:**2025