

## Support to Study: Quick Student Guide

The Support to Study Procedure is designed to support students who, **due to health issues or disability**, may be struggling with their studies or with being in the University environment. This quick guide should be read in conjunction with the full [Support to Study Procedure](#).

### *What is the Support to Study Procedure?*

If there are concerns that your health (including your mental health) or disability is having an impact on your capability to study or engage fully with University activities, or that your studies are adversely affecting your health, the University may initiate the Support to Study Procedure. This is **not** a punishment and is **not** the same as disciplinary action. The aim is to support you and your health to help you succeed on your programme of study.

The Support to Study Procedure has three levels. Most Support to Study cases begin at Level 1, but it is important to note that the Procedure can be invoked at any level and does not need to progress through each level in order.

### *Level 1: Informal Support*

At this level, additional support will be provided via your academic unit. This usually comes from your personal tutor/supervisor, or another member of your academic unit if the relationship with your personal tutor/supervisor has broken down. You may also be having support from the Student Health & Wellbeing Service

You will be invited to a non-confrontational and supportive meeting to discuss what support – if any – needs to be put in place to help you to continue with your studies. This might include directing you to relevant support services, talking to you about the PEC process, or talking to you about a voluntary interruption of studies to enable you to concentrate on your health. There will also be regular meetings (at least once per month) to make sure that no further support is required.

### *Level 2: Formal Support*

Your academic unit or the Student Health and Wellbeing Service (SHWS) may initiate more formal support where Level 1 support has not been successful, or where it is felt that you require additional support beyond what your personal tutor/supervisor can provide. This usually takes the form of a meeting conducted by your academic unit and SHWS. You can expect to receive formal written notice of this meeting and you may be asked to provide additional evidence or information – for example, medical evidence. You are allowed to bring a friend or supporter along with you to any formal meeting; this document will explain what they can expect from the meeting and the role they will take: [Guidance on the Role of a Friend or Supporter](#).

During the meeting, an Action Plan will be formulated which you will be expected to agree to. If you do not agree to the proposed Action Plan, you may be informed that your case will be referred to Level 3 of this Procedure.

### *Level 3: Fitness to Study Considerations*

If Level 1 or Level 2 actions have not been effective in allowing you to meet the requirements of your programme of study, or if your situation is judged to be of a more significant concern, you may be referred to an impartial 'Fitness to Study' panel. A 'more significant concern' means that one or more of the following criteria applies:

- You have not addressed the serious concerns raised about your capability to study at Level 2 of this procedure;
- Your behaviour has created further serious concerns beyond that at Level 2;
- The circumstances presented raise particularly serious issues regarding your capability to study successfully;
- There is evidence that your studies are having an adverse effect on your health;
- There is evidence that your health issues are having a significant adverse impact on - or pose a risk to - you or others.

The Fitness to Study Panel will be made up of at least 3 members of the University. This usually includes the Director of SHWS (or their nominee) plus two other Academic colleagues who have not previously been involved with your case.

The purpose of the Panel hearing is to gather information to be able to assess whether you are fit to continue with your studies. You will be invited to provide a written statement in advance of the Panel hearing, and you will also be given the opportunity to answer questions from the Panel about your health and its impact on your studies. If you do not attend the hearing, it will normally still go ahead to reach a decision in your absence on the information available to the panel.

The Panel may ask for further information from key areas of the University, such as your Academic Unit, Accommodation Service, or SHWS. You have the right to request that evidence and/or witness statements be taken into account by the Panel. You will receive a full set of hearing papers in advance of the hearing. For more information about what you can expect from a Fitness to Study hearing, please see the [Guidance Document for Student Committee Hearings](#).

### ***Interim suspensions***

There may be some instances where the University decides to place you on an interim suspension until your case can be heard by a Fitness to Study Panel, for example if there are serious concerns for your safety or the safety of other members of the University Community. An interim suspension is not a disciplinary sanction, but rather a precautionary measure designed to protect you and others. It will usually only remain in place until a Fitness to Study Panel can be convened to consider your case.

### ***Appeals***

You have the right to appeal against Fitness to Study panel outcomes or interim suspensions, however your reason for appeal must be one of the following:

- There is new material evidence available which was not available at the time the original decision was made;
- Procedural irregularity;
- Bias or prejudice;
- The decision reached was perverse in that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.

If you wish to make an appeal under this procedure, please carefully read the Appeals section of the [Support to Study Procedure](#) and submit your request for review to [casework@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:casework@ncl.ac.uk).

