

# Kingston University London

## MENTAL HEALTH PROCEDURE

## SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

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**APPROVED BY:** University Safety, Health and Security Committee

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The University's support services work in partnership with students to help them to participate and achieve in university life.
- 1.2 Whilst it is prudent and necessary for the University to respond to serious incidents linked to a student's mental health, it should be stressed that the vast majority of the University's liaison with students with mental health conditions is around planned and on-going provision.
- 1.3 The Mental Health Procedure supplements the Mental Health Policy by clearly defining the processes that must be followed in the event of an emergency or scenario concerning a student with mental health difficulties. It provides a clear protocol for initiating a compulsory study break or withdrawal and return to study of students with mental health conditions, key contact details and offers advice and guidance for staff, on how to support students with mental health conditions.
- 1.4 The University may become aware of a student having difficulty with their mental health in a number of ways: A student may disclose this on application or during their time at Kingston; staff or other students may express concern to university support services about a student they know; or external agencies (GP surgeries or specialist mental health services) may contact the University to request support for a student.

## 2.0 Action taken when a student's behaviour or mental health is of concern

- 2.1 There may be circumstances when an urgent response is required from a member of staff when serious concerns over the behaviour or mental health of a student have been raised or witnessed. The following three types of behaviour are all examples of when an urgent response is required:
  - **Suicidal behaviour:** Defined as behaviour which can be said to place a person's own life in danger or any statements made which suggests a person intends to harm them self.
  - **Harming or threat to harm others:** If a student is very unwell, it may be a component of their mental health condition that they feel threatened by others or experience a level of aggression which is not typical to their personality.
  - **Behaviour that indirectly puts self or others at risk of harm:** An individual may behave in a way which indirectly puts themselves or others at risk of harm. For example, their behaviour may seem risky or unpredictable so that it is difficult to anticipate whether an individual will be able to calculate the risk of their behaviour to themselves or others.

In any of the above cases the emergency services must be called immediately on 999 and KUSCO Security on 66666. Details of emergency incidents will be recorded on an Incident Report Form by KUSCO Security when they are involved / informed and passed to the University Health Advisor to follow up as appropriate (section 2.4).

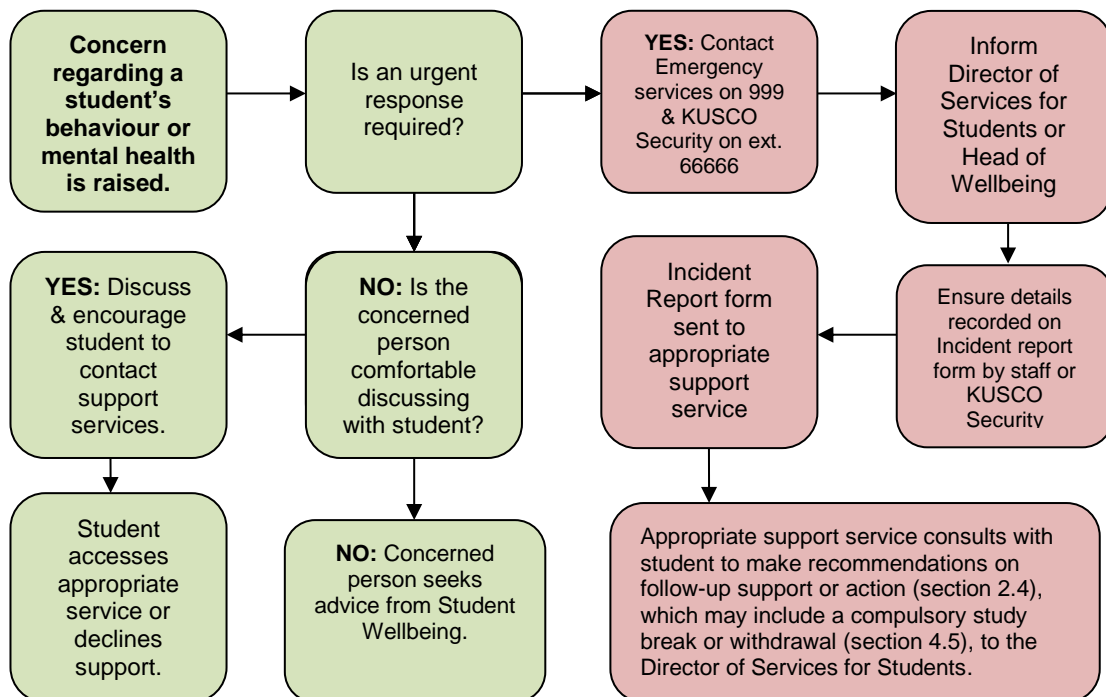
- 2.2 Where there are concerns about a student's mental wellbeing, which are not of the type that require an urgent response, it may be appropriate for staff to discuss any particular concerns they have through their usual interaction with the student. Any such mental health concerns should be discussed confidentially and in a non-judgemental way. In the first instance, staff should encourage students to make contact with student support staff, such as a Wellbeing Practitioner or a Mental Health Advisor. In the event that students are not prepared to make contact, staff can speak directly to a Wellbeing Practitioner or Mental Health Advisor for appropriate advice, receiving permission from the student whenever possible to do so.

If a student appears distressed or in need of more immediate support, but doesn't fall into any of the three categories listed in section 2.1 the student (or member of staff on behalf of the

student) should contact the Student Wellbeing service on 020 8417 2172 to book a “Crisis Slot” or “drop-in” available daily. Alternatively, the following support services can be considered:

- The Student’s General Practitioner (GP) – Fairhill University Health Centre: 020 8417 2204
- ‘NHS 111’, for emergency or urgent care services: 111
- Nightline: 020 7631 0101
- Samaritans: 08457 909090
- The Community Mental Health Team: 020 8770 5000

2.3 Please see the following chart for a summary of emergency action;



2.4 The appropriate follow-up support or action will depend on the nature of the incident.

In an emergency situation, where an ambulance has been called or a student has been advised to go to hospital, it may be appropriate to contact the student the following day via telephone or over the next few days by email to ensure they are receiving the appropriate care. It is recommended that contact is made by an appropriate member of the Student Wellbeing team.

It may also be appropriate to liaise with the faculty disability contact regarding the follow-up, especially in the event that the incident is likely to affect the student's ability to continue with their studies. This may be in cases where additional adjustments need to be implemented or in the case of a compulsory study break or withdrawal.

It is also important to highlight that in cases where a student has been detained under the Mental Health Act (1983), admitted to hospital as a result of the incident, or where their behaviour has been of particular concern or threatened the safety of others, further action may be required (section 4.0).

### 3.0 Action taken when a student declares a mental health condition

- 3.1 Some students declare a mental health condition as a disability on their UCAS forms (Table 1); others disclose their condition having begun their course at University (Table 2).

Early declaration of a mental health condition allows the University to plan the appropriate support for application, enrolment and ongoing studies. On occasions, the initiation of a course of study may not be in the best interests of the student, and a period away from study may be advised.

Table 1 - UCAS declaration:

Process	Considerations	Outcome
<p>a. Applicant declares a mental health condition on UCAS application; Initial assessment made by a Mental Health Advisor and applicant informed of KU Support Services;</p> <p>b. Further information may be requested, as determined by the Mental Health Advisor. This could include medical information from relevant professionals;</p> <p>c. A meeting may be held between the student, the Mental Health Advisor, and the Admissions tutor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact of condition on prior studies.</li> <li>Views on wellness of student and future impact on studies.</li> <li>Health and Safety issues and potential impact on all University members.</li> <li>Discussion about available support while at University.</li> <li>Applying for DSA.</li> <li>The specific requirements of the course.</li> <li>Admission to Halls.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the current impact of the applicant's condition suggest that they will struggle to meet course core requirements (even with reasonable adjustments in place)?</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>YES;</b></p> <p>Alternative courses, deferrals, or break from study suggested</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>NO;</b></p> <p>Mental Health Advisors clear the application for faculty consideration</p> </div> </div> <p><i>*Stakeholders involved throughout:</i>  <b>Student</b>  <b>Mental Health Advisor(s)</b></p> <p><i>*Stakeholders involved if necessary:</i>  <b>Medical professionals</b>  <b>Admissions Tutor</b></p>

Table 2 – Newly enrolled or existing student declaration:

Process	Considerations	Outcome
<p>a. A meeting with the Mental Health Advisor is offered to the student;</p> <p>b. Support provision is discussed, including DSA, Health and Wellbeing support and Reasonable Adjustments;</p> <p>c. Appropriate student support delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student's current level of wellbeing.</li> <li>Ongoing and anticipated impact of condition on studies.</li> <li>Effect of reasonable adjustments currently in place.</li> <li>Health and Safety issues and potential impact on all University members.</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure all appropriate adjustments and support is identified and implemented.</p> <p><i>*Stakeholders involved throughout:</i>  <b>Student</b>  <b>Mental Health Advisor(s)</b></p> <p><i>*Stakeholders involved if necessary:</i>  <b>Medical professionals</b>  <b>Academic Staff</b>  <b>Wellbeing Practitioner(s)</b></p>

#### **4.0 A compulsory study break or withdrawal of a student**

- 4.1 Whenever possible the University will make reasonable adjustments for students to enable them to remain on their programme of study. However, there may be circumstances when it is necessary for a student to take a compulsory study break, or withdraw on the grounds of a mental health difficulty and (or) inappropriate behaviour.

Where a student has already declared a mental health condition and presents as unwell by demonstrating behaviour that constitutes a potential risk of harm to self or others, it may be appropriate to impose a compulsory study break on health grounds.

If there is no history of an existing mental health condition, then unless further information comes to light, the student will be subject to the Student Disciplinary Procedure. In some cases a student may be subject to both the Mental Health procedure and the Disciplinary procedure.

Where a study break or withdrawal is to be initiated the following points will be considered:

- If the student is residing in university managed residential accommodation, due regard will be given to the continuation of their residence where there may be behaviour that could place the student, student residents or others at risk of harm.
- If the student is also undertaking employment at the University, due regard will be given to disclosing the current status of the student to the faculty or directorate responsible for the student's employment.
- If the student is studying on a Tier 4 student visa, the Director of Admissions and Visa Compliance will be consulted regarding potential impact upon the student's immigration status within the UK .

- 4.2 Ascertaining which procedure(s) the student may be subject to.

Following an incident where a student is known to have a mental health condition, or the behaviour of a student indicates that there may be a mental health condition or concern present, a Mental Health Advisor, Wellbeing Practitioner and the Director of Services for Students (or his/her nominated deputy) will review the incident and assess whether further action is required. Where further action is deemed to be required, recommendations will be made to the Vice Chancellor. In the event that further action is required, it may be appropriate to invite the student to interview.

##### **If the student is hospitalised, too unwell or refuses to be interviewed;**

In consultation with a Wellbeing Practitioner and (or) a Mental health Advisor, the Director of Services for Students (or his/her nominated deputy) will make recommendations on suggested action required to the Vice Chancellor.

##### **If an interview has been deemed necessary and the student is able to attend;**

The student will be invited to attend an interview with a minimum of 2 of the following 3 parties;

- A representative of the school / faculty
- A Mental Health Advisor and
- A Wellbeing Practitioner

The student may be accompanied by a friend, family member, or officer or staff member from The Union of Kingston Students. The individual accompanying is not permitted to make representations, ask or answer questions on behalf of the student, or attend in any legal capacity. Non legal representation by a third party may be permitted where there is a compelling reason and it is agreed in advance with the interviewers.

Where a compulsory study break or withdrawal is deemed appropriate, every effort should be made to encourage the student to consider a voluntary study break or withdrawal from their course as part of maintaining their health and wellbeing.

If an interview is not deemed necessary, or a student fails to attend (unless there are health reasons for the non-attendance), or is not prepared to take a voluntary study break or withdraw, the Director of Services for Students (or his/her nominated deputy) in consultation with a Wellbeing Practitioner and (or) a Mental Health Advisor will make recommendations on suggested action required to the Vice Chancellor.

Where recommended, the Vice Chancellor may wish to impose a compulsory study break on health grounds, pending appropriate psychiatric assessment of the student's wellness and ability to return to study safely (section 5). It will be made clear that the University is enforcing this course of action because the student's behaviour is likely to adversely impact upon self or others ability to access their studies or aspects of University life and that either;

- With or without support the student remains too unwell to participate in studies;
- The student refuses to co-operate or engage with the process.

4.3 In the event of a compulsory study break, the following steps should be taken by the Director of Services for Students (or her/his nominated deputy):

- a. A letter will be sent within five University working days (Monday-Friday, excluding bank and public holidays) outlining: the reasons for the decision; details of appeals processes (see section 6); information on how to return to study; the opportunity to access appropriate support from Student Wellbeing; and any other agreed conditions or support.
- b. The student will be provided with the appropriate support needed to withdraw from their programme such as liaison with statutory services, GPs or other relevant figures.
- c. The compulsory study break will be imposed until they can provide appropriate evidence from the relevant qualified medical professionals that they are well enough to return and any fitness to practice considerations can be met (section 5).
- d. The relevant amendments will be made to the student's record.
- e. If the student's behaviour is such that under usual circumstances they would have been subject to disciplinary procedures, this may remain the most appropriate course of action, even if there is evidence that the student has an identified mental health problem or other diagnosed condition. In certain cases, it may be appropriate for a student on a compulsory study break on mental health grounds, to also be subject to disciplinary procedures.

The fact that a student has mental health difficulties does not lessen the duty of care that the University has to other students and staff, therefore the duty of care to students with mental health difficulties should be balanced against the duty of care to other students and staff. If a mental health condition is confirmed, views on the insight of the student into their own behaviour are relevant and may be sought from relevant medical professionals.

Advice and guidance on the Student disciplinary Procedure can be sought from the Compliance Advisors in Student Life.

Based upon further evidence the University may decide to convert the compulsory study break to a withdrawal.

**5.0 Return to study of a student on a compulsory study break, or a student who has been detained under the Mental Health Act (1983)**

5.1 When the University is made aware that a student has been formally admitted to hospital under the Mental Health Act (1983), or is planning to return to study following a period of hospitalisation under the Mental Health Act (1983), a Mental Health Advisor should be informed immediately.

5.2 The following steps should be taken when a student is requesting a return to study following a compulsory study break (section 4) on the grounds of mental health, and (or) where the student has been admitted to hospital under a detention of the Mental Health Act (1983).

a. The Mental Health Advisor or Wellbeing Practitioner will ensure the appropriate faculty is notified, and contact the student to explain the support available, the process for returning, and to request the student's permission to liaise with the relevant qualified medical professional in order to gain the following:

- An assessment of the student's current mental health and advice on whether a return to study may be detrimental to their mental health, or the wellbeing of others and
- Written confirmation advising whether a return to study is recommended.

In some instances:

- Additional information may be requested if it is felt the student may have special support requirements or if there is another reason for concern.
- An internal case conference may be held to consider and review a return to study.

b. The student will be required to attend a meeting with a Mental Health Advisor and / or a Wellbeing Practitioner in order to:

- Discuss with the student their current mental health;
- Discuss any previous concerns and identify strategies to prevent their reoccurrence (e.g. consider part-time study to reduce work pressure);
- Identify any potential adjustments and support requirements.

The student may be accompanied by a friend, family member, or officer or staff member from the Union of Kingston Students. The individual accompanying is not permitted to make representations, ask or answer questions on behalf of the student, or attend in any legal capacity. Non legal representation by a third party may be permitted where there is a compelling reason and it is agreed in advance with the interviewers.

*In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the Mental Health Advisor and (or) the Wellbeing Practitioner to attend a meeting with the student and external agencies in order to facilitate these requirements, particularly where the student has been hospitalised under the Mental Health Act (1983).*

c. The Faculty in consultation with the Mental Health Advisor will then make a decision about the suitability of the student's return to study and advise the student accordingly. At this point the Faculty will be responsible for initiating the Fitness to Practise procedure where appropriate. Where a student has been on a compulsory study break on health grounds and the recommendation is to end the compulsory study break, the Vice-Chancellor shall be advised by the Director of Services for Students (or his/her nominated deputy). If the student's return to study is approved, the mental Health Advisor, subject to relevant evidence, may update an existing Summary of Support Needs or draft a Summary of Support Needs where one does not already exist. This report will outline the support needs of the student and the reasonable adjustments the university should be making for their circumstances.



- 5.3 In circumstances where a student has voluntarily taken a study break from their course of study due to a mental health difficulty and wishes to return following a period of recuperation, medical evidence of suitability to study may still be required. However, where there has been a recent period of hospitalisation and (or) successive periods of deferral, section 5.1 of this procedure may be followed.

## 6.0 Complaints / Appeals procedure

- 6.1 It is the policy of the University to resolve any complaint a student may have about services provided by the University or treatment by any staff member, student or visitor as quickly and fairly as possible. Students have a right to complain if they are dissatisfied with their: academic treatment; a decision made to impose a compulsory study break; a delay in their return to study; or if they feel they have been discriminated against in any way.

Please note that this refers to the Students Complaints procedure and is separate from the Academic Appeals Procedure.

- 6.2 If a student wishes to complain they should follow the process outlined in the Student Complaints Procedure or the Academic Appeals Procedure. In the first instance, the student should try to resolve their complaint informally with the person and (or) department concerned. If resolution proves unsuccessful at local level then the complaint can be formally investigated as per the Student Complaints / Appeals Procedure.

Please note that if the complaint relates in some way to the University's failing to meet the needs caused by a student's disability or relates to an alleged breach of the Equality Act (2010), then the complaint should be raised in the first instance with the University's Advice and Compliance Manager.

Independent advice and guidance on using the Student Complaints Procedure is available from Student Life.

## 7.0 Review and update

- 7.1 This procedure will be reviewed together with the Mental Health Policy:

- Biennially from the issue date or;
- Following any major organisational changes that may affect the policy or;
- Following any incident associated with the procedure.

Reviews will inform any future amendments to this policy.

- 7.2 Policy amendments or updates should be recorded in the following table.

Ref No.	Date.	Detail of update.	Issue.
4.2	01/02/16	First paragraph amended to include "the behaviour of a student indicates a mental health condition".	2.0
4.3(d)	01/02/16	Additional point added.	2.0
5.1(c)	01/02/16	Wellbeing Practitioner removed and initiation of fitness to practise procedure by faculty added.	2.0
5.2	01/02/16	Change of wording to refer back to section 5.1.	2.0
ALL	10/09/15	Language change from 'suspension' to 'a compulsory study break'.	2.0
ALL	03/08/16	Language updated to reflect organisational structure changes: Director of Services for Students; Mental Health Advisors; and The Union of Kingston Students	2.0
5.1	03/08/16	Added to clarify that Mental Health Advisors should be made aware when a student has been detained under the Mental Health Act (1983)	2.0



5.2a	03/08/16	Updated to reflect the addition on point 5.1	2.0
4.3a	01/11/16	Changed notification period from 7 days to 5 University working days as per Student disciplinary procedure.	2.0
5.2c	01/11/16	Removed reference to 'excluded' students as excluded is permanent and therefore they wouldn't be returning under this process.	2.0
4.1	01/11/06	Paragraph inserted with reference to disclosure when student also employed by University.	2.0
4.1	30/03/17	Section added to include appropriate action regarding University accommodation.	2.0
4.1	30/03/17	Section added to include appropriate action regarding Tier 4 student visas.	2.0