



Wellness and Support Policy

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Summary of Process

Wellness and Support Stage	Overview
Stage 1	Used in the instance of low-level, emerging concerns. Most, but not all cases will initially be considered at this stage, however it is possible to refer directly to Stages 2 and 3.
Stage 2	<p>Implemented in the instance of more significant or ongoing concerns including instances where students have applied to or are currently participating in a placement, fieldtrip, or study abroad programme.</p> <p>Will also be referred to if a student wishes to return to study following an elected break in studies arising from a known or suspected disability.</p>
Stage 3	<p>A panel assessment initiated where there are more immediate or serious concerns about a student. This will typically be used when intervention at an early stage has been unsuccessful however, cases can be referred directly to Stage 3 dependent on the circumstances, for example in the instance of risk to staff and/or student wellbeing or safety.</p> <p>A panel will also usually be required to review requests to return to study following an elected break in studies or suspension arising from previous consideration at a Stage 3 Panel.</p> <p>Only a panel may implement a suspension outside of urgent provisional action, or withdrawal.</p>
Urgent Provisional Action	Where serious concerns exist, Wellbeing Services urgent provisional action to suspend a student's studies pending a Wellness and Support meeting or panel.
Appeals	Following a Stage 3 Panel, students may appeal a decision to mandatorily suspend or withdraw if specific conditions are met. Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome.

More detailed criteria and information is provided below, which will be referred to when staff consider the stage at which the concerns will be considered.

Introduction

1. Birkbeck is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, supportive environment that enables all students to safely engage in their studies and fulfil their potential.
2. This policy is concerned with students' ability to participate safely and effectively in the Birkbeck community and activities and adhere to [Birkbeck's Terms and Conditions of Study, including the Principles of Dignity at Work and Study](#) and [Being a Member of the Birkbeck Community](#).
3. The policy outlines the College's response in situations where there are concerns that students may not be able to meet behavioural and/or academic expectations and requirements due to a known or suspected disability. This includes circumstances where it is believed that engaging in study may have an undue negative impact on a student's health that cannot be mitigated, and they may not therefore be well enough to study.
4. It is expected that students can, with appropriate and reasonable adjustments and support, demonstrate the below:
 - a) Awareness of their own physical or psychological health, disability and safety and that of others
 - b) Ability to attend and engage effectively, appropriately, and safely in in-person and/or remote activities.
 - c) Ability to safely and effectively undertake private and self-directed study.
 - d) Ability to study at the level and intensity required of their programme.
 - e) Ability to communicate and engage effectively and appropriately with members of our community.
 - f) Can safely live independently in student residencies (where relevant)
 - g) Willingness and ability to seek and engage in appropriate support as required
 - h) Willingness and ability to engage actively, appropriately, safely, and as expected in relevant processes
 - i) Legal capacity
5. The College has policies, procedures and services to support students to engage with appropriately, affectively and safely with their studies. Students are expected to engage actively with the available support.

Scope and Purpose

6. The policy is applicable to all levels, stages, and modes of study from the point of receipt of an offer to study through to completion, with the following exceptions:
 - a) Students who are registered on a PSRB programme where fitness to practice applies
 - b) Students who are currently overseas on a Study Abroad programme
 - c) Students who are studying at Birkbeck on an inter-collegiate basis where registration is with another university.

7. This procedure is intended to be supportive and operates in three stages. Students may be referred into any of the three stages depending on the circumstances. The focus at all stages is to enable students to study fulfil their potential whilst staying well, by working collaboratively with the student and others involved in their care to do the following:
 - a) Consider the student's needs and any reasonable adjustments, support, and options available to help them to make informed decisions, and to jointly develop an action plan.
 - b) Assess whether the College can support a student to [re-]enrol or continue to participate in their studies; this includes course related activities that take place outside of the traditional theory-based learning environment e.g. study abroad opportunities, placements or field trips.

Any recommendations or action taken are done so with the best interests of the student's wellbeing, health, safety, studies, and that of others in mind.

8. The Wellness and Support Policy is part of a suite of student policies. The college may refer to other policies and procedures under, but not limited to, the following circumstances:
 - a) It is believed this policy cannot appropriately address the identified concern(s)
 - b) There is insufficient evidence to suggest that the identified concern(s) arises from a disability.

- c) Students do not fully engage with the procedures or support provided
9. The policy is not intended to respond to or manage issues solely related to academic performance, where there is no clear link between this and a suspected or known disability.

Wellness and Support Meeting (Stage 1)

10. A Wellness and Support meeting (stage 1) should be initiated when an emerging concern(s) is identified regarding or which is believed but may not be known to arise from a suspected or confirmed disability. These will usually be low-level concerns that do not require immediate or specialist support.

Aims and Outcomes:

11. The primary purpose of the meeting is to identify the cause of the concern, gather contextual information and collaboratively develop and agree an action plan to support students to engage with their studies, college provisions and community safely, appropriately, and effectively whilst staying well. Outcomes may include:
- a) It is agreed that the concern(s) can be managed under this policy at Stage 1 and does not currently warrant escalation. An action plan which may include reasonable adjustments, expectations, conditions, signposting or an elective break in studies is agreed.
 - b) As a result of insufficient or inappropriate engagement, it is determined that the concern(s) raised would be most appropriately managed through escalation to Stage 2 or 3.
 - c) It is assessed that the concern(s) is not appropriate for consideration under this policy. This may result in a referral to other policies and procedures.

How students will be notified:

12. The College aims to provide 5 working days' written notice of the meeting.

Student responsibilities:

13. Students must respond promptly to meeting invitations. If a student is unable to attend, they must provide at least 48 hours' cancellation. If students do not provide notice or do not engage in the process, the meeting may go ahead in their absence, and this may affect the outcome.
14. Students are expected to participate actively and appropriately in the Wellness and Support process, including providing medical evidence or engaging in assessment as requested and engaging in and adhering to any expectations identified and action plans agreed. If a student fails to engage as expected, this may result in further action, such as a referral to Stage 2 or 3.

Following the meeting:

15. An outline of agreed outcomes will be shared with the student and all relevant staff members within 5 working days.
16. Wellbeing Services will liaise with any relevant external services involved in the student's care and/or the emergency contact where appropriate, to help manage any unintended distress that might arise from this action and ensure the student is supported.
16. Where it has been agreed that the concerns can be managed at stage 1 and do not currently warrant escalation, a review meeting will usually be required to review progress, confirm that agreed actions have been completed and, to consider if any further reasonable adjustments, support or escalation is required. This should typically take place within 6 weeks.
17. If the student elects to take a break in studies is actioned, a note will be placed on their profile. This will prompt them to contact us prior to their return and will prevent them from enrolling before agreed actions and appropriate procedures have been completed.

Wellness and Support Meeting (Stage 2)

18. A Wellness and Support Meeting (Stage 2) will be conducted under the following circumstances:
 - a) There are concerns about an offer-holder's wellness to engage in study.
 - b) A student did not engage appropriately in stage 1 procedures and, referral to

- an alternative policy is not thought to be appropriate.
- c) Following a stage 1 meeting there is a continued or ongoing concern(s) for a student's health, disability, wellbeing, or ability to engage in study or participate in College provisions or community safely, appropriately, and effectively.
 - d) There are significant or more immediate concerns about a student's health, disability, wellbeing, or ability to engage in their studies, College provisions or community safely, appropriately, and effectively which warrants a direct referral to stage 2.
 - e) A student has applied to or is currently participating in a placement, fieldtrip, or study abroad programme and there are concerns about their ability to engage in this safely, appropriately, and effectively, whilst staying well.
 - f) A student is scheduled to return following a break in studies due to known or suspected disability related concerns.

Aims and Outcomes:

19. The purpose of the meeting is to address the concern(s) raised, gather contextual information and confirm whether the concern(s) is suitable for continued consideration and management under this policy. Colleagues will work collaboratively with the student to develop and agree an action plan to support students to engage with their studies, college provisions and community safely, appropriately, and effectively whilst staying well. Outcomes may include:
 - a) It is agreed the concern(s) can be managed under this policy at Stage 2 and does not currently warrant escalation. An action plan which may include reasonable adjustments, expectations, conditions, and signposting or an elective break in studies is agreed.
 - b) It is determined that a deferral or enrollment or retraction of offer is required. This is at the discretion of the Wellbeing Services.
 - c) It is determined that a return to studies cannot be supported and a continued break in studies or suspension is required.
 - d) Rejection of application to or removal from study abroad programme, placement, or field trip. This may consequently require deferral of modules or assessments and/or a break in studies.
 - e) A request for suspension of regulations is submitted
 - f) As a result of insufficient or inappropriate engagement or identification of risk, it is determined that the concern(s) raised would be most appropriately managed through escalation to Stage 3.

- g) It is assessed that the concern(s) is not appropriate for consideration under this policy. This may result in a referral to other policies and procedures.

How students will be notified:

20. The College aims to provide 5 working days' written notice of the meeting and any other requirements, such as the provision of medical evidence or assessment with our medical advisor and relevant timeframes.

Student responsibilities:

21. Students and offer-holders must respond promptly to meeting invitations. If a student is unable to attend, they must provide at least 48 hours' cancellation. If students do not provide notice or do not engage in the process, the meeting may go ahead in their absence, and this may affect the outcome.
22. Students and offer-holders may be accompanied to the panel by a companion of their choice. The companion is there to support the student, but not to contribute to the meeting or advocate on a student's behalf. This might be a friend, parent or healthcare professional, but it cannot be another member of the College community, nor a legal representative. Students may be accompanied by a member of the Students' Union Advice Service. Students are asked to provide the College with the name of their companion and their relationship to them at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The College asks for details so that it can be clear that there is no conflict of interest and that the companion is not a member of the College community, as outlined above.
23. Students and offer-holders are expected to participate actively and appropriately in the Wellness and Support process, including providing medical evidence or engaging in assessment as requested and engaging in and adhering to any expectations identified and action plans agreed. If a student fails to engage as expected, this may result in further action, such as reconsideration under Stage 2 or a referral to Stage 3.

After the meeting:

24. An outline of agreed outcomes will be shared with the student and all relevant staff members within 5 working days.

25. Where it has been agreed that the concerns can be managed at stage 2 and do not currently warrant escalation, a review meeting will usually be required. to review progress, confirm that agreed actions have been completed and, to consider if any further reasonable adjustments, support or escalation is required. This should typically take place within 6 weeks.

26. If a deferral of enrolment, withdrawal of offer or break in studies is actioned, a note will be placed on the student's profile. This will prompt the student to contact us prior to their return and will prevent them from enrolling before agreed actions and appropriate procedures have been completed.

Wellness and Support Panel (Stage 3)

27. A Wellness and Support panel will be convened under the following conditions:
- a) A student has not engaged as expected in stage 1 or 2 procedures and, based on the information available, it is determined that referral to panel is appropriate.
 - b) There are ongoing concern(s) that have not been resolved at stage 1 and/or 2.
 - c) Following stage 2, it is determined that the support and adjustment needs exceed what can be reasonably and appropriately provided.
 - d) There is sufficiently significant concern about a student's health, safety, and/or their ability to study and engage appropriately in the College community to require an immediate referral to Stage 3.
 - e) There are serious concerns regarding risk to the education, health, wellbeing, or safety of others.
28. A Stage 3 panel will be chaired by a senior office of the College and will consist of the following:
- a) A representative of the student's Faculty.
 - b) A representative of another Faculty or School, or from Faculty Leadership and;
 - c) The Head of Student Wellbeing Services or Nominee.
29. The panel may also include as appropriate:
- a) The College medical advisor.
 - b) A mental health or disability and dyslexia advisor.
 - c) A representative from the International Student Administration.
 - d) A senior member of staff from Professional Services.

Aims and Outcomes:

30. The purpose of the meeting is to objectively address the concern(s) raised and assess the case based on written information and verbal statements where appropriate, to consider the recommendations made by staff on referral and

confirm whether the concern(s) is suitable for continued consideration and management under this policy. Colleagues will work collaboratively with the student to develop an action plan. Outcomes may include:

- a) It is agreed the concern(s) can be managed under this policy at Stage 3. An action plan which may include reasonable adjustments, expectations, conditions, and signposting or an elective break in studies is agreed.
- b) It is determined that continued studies cannot at this time be supported and that a suspension or withdrawal is required.
- c) It is determined that a return to studies cannot be supported and a continued break in studies, suspension or withdrawal is required.
- d) Rejection of application to or removal from study abroad programme, placement, or field trip. This may consequently require deferral of modules or assessments and/or a break in studies.
- e) A request for suspension of regulations is submitted.
- f) It is assessed that the concern(s) is not appropriate for consideration under this policy. This may result in a referral to other policies and procedures.

How students will be notified:

31. The College aims to provide 10 working days' written notice of the panel and any other requirements, such as the provision of medical evidence or assessment with our medical advisor and relevant timeframes.

Student responsibilities:

32. Students must respond promptly to meeting invitations. If a student is unable to attend, they must provide at least 48 hours' cancellation. If students do not provide notice or do not engage in the process, the meeting may go ahead in their absence, and this may affect the outcome.
33. Students may be accompanied to the panel by a companion of their choice. The companion is there to support the student, but not to contribute to the meeting or advocate on a student's behalf. This might be a friend, parent or healthcare professional, but it cannot be another member of the College community, nor a legal representative. Students may be accompanied by a member of the Students' Union Advice Service. Students are asked to provide the College with the name of their companion and their relationship to them

at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The College asks for details so that it can be clear that there is no conflict of interest and that the companion is not a member of the College community, as outlined above.

34. Students are expected to participate actively and appropriately in the Wellness and Support process, including providing medical evidence or engaging in assessment as requested, and engaging in and adhering to any expectations identified and action plans agreed. If a student fails to engage as expected, this may result in further action, which may include suspension or withdrawal.

After the meeting:

35. An outline of agreed outcomes will be shared with the student and all relevant staff members within 5 working days. In some instances, this may take longer.
36. Wellbeing Services will liaise with any relevant external services involved in the student's care and/or the emergency contact where appropriate, to help manage any unintended distress that might arise from this action and ensure the student is supported.
37. A review at stage 3 will usually be required, except in instances where the student is withdrawn. The timeframe and process for review will be dependent on individual circumstances. It will not always be possible or appropriate to confirm a specific review date during or immediately following a panel.
38. If an elected break in studies or suspension is implemented, a note will be placed on the student's profile. This will prompt them to contact the College prior to their return and will prevent them from enrolling before agreed actions and appropriate procedures have been completed.
39. In the instance of withdrawal, a note will also be placed on the student's profile. This will prevent future application without first making contact with Wellbeing Services.
40. In cases where the panel recommends withdrawal, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Education and Student Experience or nominee and the relevant Head of

Operations will be notified.

Return to Study

41. Students must inform Wellbeing Services 3 months in advance if they wish to return to study.
42. If a student wishes to return following an elected break in studies or suspension arising from a known or suspected disability related concerns, their request will be considered at Stage 2 or 3 of this process.
43. Students are required to demonstrate and/or provide satisfactory evidence that they have overcome the original concerns and have the resources to minimise and respond to the risk of reoccurrence. Students may be required to meet with the College medical advisor.
44. Students wishing to re-apply following withdrawal under this policy, will be allowed to do so dependent on any terms previously set. They will also be required to demonstrate and/or provide satisfactory evidence that they have overcome the previous concerns and have the resources to minimise and respond to the risk of reoccurrence. Students may be required to meet with the College medical advisor.

Urgent Provisional Action

45. Wellbeing Services may take urgent provisional action to suspend a student's studies pending a Wellness and Support meeting or panel; this will be put in place for a set period, not to exceed one month. Students on a suspension will not be able to access the College premises or participate in activities without prior written agreement. This is not intended to be punitive but to ensure the College can discharge its duty of care to the student and the wider community. Circumstances in which this might apply include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Where there are serious concerns about a student's health and/or safety.
 - b) Where there are concerns about the education, health and/or safety of members of the College community including partner institutions and placement providers, or the general public.

- c) Where a student is or has recently been hospitalized as a result of poor mental or physical health.
 - d) Where a student is or has recently been detained under the Mental Health Act.
 - e) Where a student has been referred to stage 2 or 3.
46. Wellbeing Services will liaise with any relevant external services involved in the student's care and/or the emergency contact where appropriate, to help manage any unintended distress that might arise from this action and ensure the student is supported.
47. Following any urgent, provisional action, the case will be referred to Stage 2 or 3 of the policy, as deemed appropriate. This will consider whether any action taken can be lifted and/or whether an action plan can be developed to sufficiently mitigate any concerns, enabling the student to continue or return to study.
48. Students will be notified in writing of any urgent, provisional action and terms.
49. The relevant Head of Operations will be notified of any urgent provisional Action.

Appeals

50. A student may appeal against a decision to mandatorily suspend or withdraw them.
51. Students may appeal the decision on either or both of the following grounds:
- a) There is new evidence that could not have been, or for good reason was not, made available at the time of the Panel, and the case warrants further consideration.
 - b) Evidence can be produced of significant procedural error on the part of the College before or during the Panel, and the case warrants further consideration.
52. Appeals should be lodged within 10 working days of receipt of the Stage 3 Panel outcome by submitting a written statement detailing the grounds for request (see paragraph 51). This should be emailed to Student Complaints, Conduct & Appeals at appeals@bbk.ac.uk.
53. The appeal will be considered by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Education and Student Experience or their nominee, having reviewed the meetings minutes and evidence, and the outcome sent to the student within 15 working days.
54. If the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Education and Student Experience or nominee considers the appeal should be heard, it will be referred to an Appeals Panel.
55. The Appeals Panel will, where possible, comprise staff who are familiar with the student and may include members from Panel who made the decision at Stage 3 (the Original Panel). The outcome from the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Education and Student Experience (or nominee) will set out the appropriate composition of the Appeal Panel.
56. The Appeal Panel may reject or uphold the appeal. Where the Appeal Panel upholds the appeal, the Panel may make one or more of the following decisions:
- a) Modify or reverse the decision of Original Panel.

b) Uphold the decision of the Original Panel.

57. Where an Appeal Panel rejects the appeal, the decision of the Original Panel stands. The College will send the student a letter called a *Completion of Procedures Letter*.

58. If the appeal is not upheld, If the appeal is upheld or partly upheld, the university will issue a Completion of Procedures letter once all aspects are concluded.

59. A decision of an Appeal Panel will be final.

60. Wellbeing Services will liaise with any relevant external services involved in the student's care and/or the emergency contact where appropriate, to help manage any unintended distress that might arise at any point during the process of review.

Monitoring and Review

61. This policy and related procedure are subject to review every three years, led by Wellbeing Services.

62. The College will maintain anonymised records on the use of this policy for monitoring, reporting and review.

Created: June 2012 (Fitness to Study Policy)

Latest update: July 2024 (Education Committee approval)

Date of next review: 2026/27

Owner: Head of Student Wellbeing Services

SLT owner: DVC Education and Student Experience

Committee oversight: Education Committee for Academic Board