



UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER

Supporting Students to Succeed:

Support to Study Procedures

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Summary/Description: This document details the processes through which the University will support students to succeed academically at Winchester (and at collaborative partners). This document should be read in conjunction with the University's Exceptional Circumstances Procedures. Support to Study, these procedures, is driven by the University and its staff in response to more enduring exceptional circumstances.	

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This list summarises the changes since 2022/23 version. The date confirms when the changes will be implemented.

Implementation date	Changes Approved by Senate
01/02/23	<p>Policy updated to reflect:</p> <p>Changes to the complaints section following internal review</p>
27/08/23	<p>Policy updated to reflect:</p> <p>2.1.1 Only one EC on any second third attempt, no ECs on exceptional third attempts.</p>
1.9.24	<p>Procedures updated to reflect:</p> <p>Separation of Exceptional Circumstances from these procedures following PACE review</p>
	<p>Updated to reflect new terminology (Exceptional Circumstances)</p>
	<p>Clarification of timeline for appeal against exceptional interruption/withdrawal</p>
	<p>Removal of separate PGR document</p>
	<p>Removal of annual report requirement</p>
	<p>Removal of Visa leave of absence form requirement</p>
	<p>Updated extensions flow chart</p>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

1	Scope of Support to study	5
1.1	Introduction	5
2	The Support to Study Route	5
2.1	Introduction	5
2.2	Stages of Support to Study	5
2.3	Types of Concern	6
2.4	Stage 1 - detailed procedures	6
2.5	Stage 1 Support Meeting	7
2.6	Possible outcomes from Stage 1	8
2.7	Post Stage 1 meeting actions	8
2.8	Reviewing the Stage 1 Action Plan	8
2.9	Stage 2 detailed procedures.....	9
2.10	Stage 2 Support Meeting.....	9
2.11	Possible outcomes at Stage 2.....	10
2.12	Examples of when a direct referral to Stage 2 could occur	10
2.13	Exceptional Circumstances – Interruption without a support meeting.....	10
2.15	Returning to Study Following Support to Study Recommended Interruption	11
2.15	Central Recording and Monitoring.....	12
3	Appendices	13
3.1	Appendix 1 - Record of Stage 1/2 – Notes of Support Meeting/Review (Link)	13
3.3	Appendix 3 - Return to Study Plan (Link)	13
3.4	Appendix 4 - Extending Assignment Deadlines through Support to Study (Link).....	13

1 SCOPE OF SUPPORT TO STUDY

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 These procedures cover all students. All students have a responsibility to manage their learning. This includes submitting work to deadlines. Meeting deadlines is a normal part of work and is vital to professional development.

1.1.2 However, the University recognises that there may be times when adverse circumstances, beyond their direct control, prevent students from completing work to a deadline, or to their customary standard of achievement.

1.1.3 This document details the Support to Study Route. The Exceptional Circumstances Route, is detailed in a separate document (<https://www.winchester.ac.uk/media/Critical-Documents/Exceptional-Circumstances-and-Self-Certification-Policy-2024-5-July-2024.pdf>). The Support to Study route is driven by the University.

1.1.4 Normally, a student would access Support to Study through the Exceptional Circumstances route, though exceptions may apply. The University may choose to place students directly on Support to Study route.

1.1.5 The normal trigger through the Exceptional Circumstances pathway for Support to Study is when a student does not submit after two successive extensions for the same assignment.

1.1.6 Advice on these Procedures and appeals (see 2.6) can be sought from the Faculty [Student Support and Success Advisor](#) (SSSA) or the Students' Union (www.winchesterstudents.co.uk/advice)

1.1.7 The Support Framework sits alongside and complements the mechanisms for Self-Certification as detailed in Section 10 of the Exceptional Circumstances and Self-Certification [Policy](#).

1.1.8 At all times students are encouraged to seek support from the [Student Support and Success](#) (SSaS) if they are experiencing difficulties. This includes those students who may live with long-term health conditions or disabilities and who would benefit from additional support.

2 THE SUPPORT TO STUDY ROUTE

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Support to Study route is intended to aid both staff and students in cases where there is evidence of student disengagement from their studies, or where student wellbeing or ability to engage in student life is such that normal adjustments are not sufficient. It is a supportive route to assist the small number of students whose behaviour gives cause for concern. Support to Study can offer an alternative to the disciplinary procedures where behavioural concerns may have their cause in health conditions or disabilities.

2.1.2 The following procedures apply to all students on all courses, placements, field trips and any University activities in and out of semester time, whether living on or off campus and applies to all aspects of University life. It is expected that the majority of students who enter Support to Study will have previously engaged with other avenues of support, such as Exceptional Circumstances. Support to Study will be considered if a student does not submit after two successive extensions for the same assignment.

2.1.3 We expect our students to act responsibly and to conduct themselves in ways that do not compromise either their own wellbeing or that of other members of the University community. We also recognise that, in some circumstances, students may experience difficulties or have conditions that may require additional support in order for them to succeed. Staff supporting students with their mental wellbeing, health or life choices, are expected to be respectful.

2.1.4 The aim of Support to Study is to sustain the progress of the student in a supportive environment while being mindful of the need to exercise our duty of care to the student and those around them, so that the best possible student experience is achieved for all.

2.2 Stages of Support to Study

2.2.1 Support to Study is a formal process and should only be used where other routes are either not available or beneficial to the student. Initial and basic concerns (Stage 0) are often effectively

addressed by routine support and/or service referrals and lead to improved academic engagement and/or personal wellbeing.

Stage 1: Continuing or serious concern (Support Meeting and formal plan)

Stage 1 covers initial concerns which endure despite lower-level support or more serious concerns such as where a student's behaviour is adversely affecting their own or other students' studies or personal physical or mental health and wellbeing.

Stage 2: Persistent or critical concern (Support Meeting and formal plan)

Stage 2 covers more serious concerns which endure despite Stage 1 support or more critical concerns where a student's actions or behaviour are putting the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of him/herself or other members of the University community at significant risk.

2.2.2 The University can enter students at either Stage or move students between Stages.

2.3 Types of Concern

2.3.1 Concerns may arise in any one of a wide range of circumstances, including (but not restricted to) the following:

- a) Disengagement from academic studies;
- b) Conduct which would usually be dealt with as a disciplinary matter, but which may be known to be, or suspected to be, the result of underlying physical or mental health difficulties;
- c) A student's physical or mental health difficulties are substantially adversely affecting the physical or mental health, safety or wellbeing of themselves or others;
- d) The student's support needs fall outside the scope of the support and other services which the University can reasonably be expected to provide, either directly or indirectly.

2.4 Stage 1 - detailed procedures

2.4.1 Stage 1 will apply when:

- A student's situation continues to be of concern despite earlier interventions
- Following two successive non-submissions for the same assignment or the Faculty Student Support and Success Advisor recommends it.
- There are serious concerns for the student (or the impact on others) related to unusual or concerning behaviour such as disruptive actions, a marked change/ deterioration in general demeanour, unexplained changes in level of engagement, speaking or acting in a way that gives concern for mental/ physical health or communication of distress related to a significant event.

2.4.2 Any member of staff within the University may become aware of issues that are affecting a student's health, safety, behaviour or wellbeing. Stage 1 of these procedures can be invoked, with the agreement of their line manager, by a member of staff with a direct link to the student or a member of staff who holds responsibility for the student's care. For example:

- An appropriate member of staff from the Faculty in which the concern has been raised, e.g. Programme Leader, Programme Administrator, Tutor, Faculty Student Support & Success Advisor (SSSA) etc.
- An appropriate member of staff in the professional service where the concern has been raised, e.g. Housing Manager, Security Manager, Site Steward, Campus Supervisor, Catering Supervisor, Librarian etc.

2.4.3 Before Support to Study is invoked, the line manager to whom the concern has been raised agrees a lead person (Chair) and separate notetaker for the meeting. Where a Student Support & Success Advisor identifies a need for Support to Study they will approach the appropriate line manager to identify the above.

2.4.4 The lead person will have overall responsibility for ensuring all university policy, processes and

procedures and timescales are followed.

- 2.4.5 When staff outwith Student Support and Success are considering invoking Stage 1, they should approach the Faculty Student Support & Success Advisor (SSSA) or Faculty Support Co-ordinator in Student Support and Success to determine if the student is already known and being supported and whether other support routes are preferable. Information may be shared per the [Privacy and Cookie Policy webpage](#), see the [Data Protection Policy](#) for full details.
- 2.4.6 The lead person will send the Stage 1 Support to Study Meeting invitation to the student via unimail normally providing 5 working days' notice. The invitation will include the following information:
- Purpose of the meeting
 - Attendees invited
 - Link to this [guidance webpage](#)
 - Request for any evidence required for the meeting (see 3.5.7)

2.5 Stage 1 Support Meeting

- 2.5.1 The Stage 1 Support meeting should include the student, in addition to the following members of staff as appropriate¹:
- Programme Leader or academic member of staff/Professional Service Manager/Supervisor (**Chair and Lead**)
 - Head of Doctoral School (PGR students only)
 - Representative of Student Support & Success (if appropriate)
 - Notetaker
- The meeting must consist of more than 1 member of staff and, normally, no more than 5 people.
- 2.5.2 The student may be accompanied in a supportive capacity; this is in addition to any representative of Student Support and Success. The lead staff member should ensure the student has the opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns.
- 2.5.3 Meetings via MS Teams will be offered, in line with the student's preference, and where appropriate to the situation.
- 2.5.4 If a student is unable to attend the Stage 1 meeting, due to exceptional circumstances, for which evidence has been provided, or chooses not to attend, they will have the option to nominate a member of staff to represent them, or to request that a member of the Students Union executive attend in their place. If they choose not to have someone attend in their absence the meeting will still go ahead. It may be that the chair of the meeting is unable to determine a full programme of supportive action, but it is preferable to start the process and amend it subsequently, when the student is able to engage with the process.
- 2.5.5 The Chair shall attempt to assess the student's perception of their academic progress and any impact that their physical or mental health and/or behaviour is having on themselves and/or the University community. This may require a medical assessment to be sought, normally from the student's GP or medical professional (see Appendix 2). The student shall be encouraged to consent to the assessment, where it is agreed this would be helpful.
- 2.5.6 If the student withholds their consent, decisions may be made based on the information available.
- 2.5.7 The student shall be able to submit documents, normally no later than 48 hours prior, for the support meeting to consider and should retain a copy for their reference.
- 2.5.8 The support meeting may seek information or advice from others within or outside the University.
- 2.5.9 The support meeting may discuss with the student whether it would be appropriate for them to

¹ Staff should be mindful not to overwhelm a student and should ensure meeting membership is kept to a necessary minimum.

interrupt their studies, via Leave of Absence (up to two weeks) or Interruption in accordance with prevailing Academic Regulations.

- 2.5.10 Where the student wishes to voluntarily interrupt their studies at this stage, this should be favourably considered with the provision for a review of the physical or mental health and wellbeing of the student at the end of the interruption period as a condition of their return to studies (see appendix 3).

2.6 Possible outcomes from Stage 1

2.6.1 Possible outcomes of Stage 1 include:

- no on-going action required. Meeting notes shared and no further Support to Study meetings required.
- devise an Action Plan (See Appendix 1) to support the student (where appropriate) and formally agree expectations for the student to observe. Action plans may include, for example, amendments to deadlines within the same academic year (extensions and/or leave of absence) or changes to mode of delivery in agreement with Programme Leaders/Supervisors. (While on Support to Study, students should not apply for extensions through the Exceptional Circumstances Panel). This Stage 1 Action Plan may be academic and/or conduct-related. Review meetings shall be arranged with the student as needed. The student shall be made aware of what will happen if the action plan is not met or the concerns are not resolved within the timeframe set in the Action Plan. This may result in escalating to a higher level.²
- recommendation to escalate to Stage 2.

2.7 Post Stage 1 meeting actions

- 2.7.1 Within 7 working days of the meeting, the Notetaker shall write up agreed actions of the support meeting (using the [Action Plan Template](#)) and save it in the Faculty MS Teams Support to Study Group (relevant departmental channel and files tab).
- 2.7.2 A copy of the action plan should be emailed to the student within 7 working days of the meeting.
- 2.7.3 The email should advise that the student has 7 days from the date sent to reply to confirm acceptance of the meeting outcome and that, should they not reply, the University will assume the student understands and accepts the action plan.
- 2.7.4 The intention is to encourage the student to engage with the Action Plan and access the outlined support and modify their conduct.
- 2.7.5 Should the student not respond positively, then the Chair shall discuss the situation with the other members of the meeting with a view to determining whether the case should be considered for Stage 2. (see 2.9.4)

2.8 Reviewing the Stage 1 Action Plan

- 2.8.1 Each time the Action Plan is reviewed, colleagues attending the support meeting shall decide whether to:
- close the action³
 - the Action Plan should be continued or extended/amended; or

² Colleagues comprising the Support to Study meeting panel will have authority to review a student's academic assessment schedule for the remainder of the current semester and agree a revised schedule of staggered deadlines, balancing the interests of the student and the academic requirements. Staff wishing to clarify extension periods should see the flowchart under Appendix 4.

³ Where the concerns are deemed to have been fully resolved, the Action shall be closed. The Chair shall verbally inform the student and shall follow up the meeting with written confirmation. Copies of the final action plan shall be forwarded to anyone involved to ensure that everyone is aware that the matter is now closed.

- recommend an escalation to Stage 2

2.9 Stage 2 detailed procedures

- 2.9.1 Stage 2 should only be used rarely. This may be when a student's engagement or wellbeing is not improving, despite a Stage 1 intervention or a student's actions or behaviour are putting the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of him/herself or other members of the University community at significant and immediate risk.
- 2.9.2 In most cases escalation to this stage will follow attempts to address concerns through Stage 1. However, in some cases it may be appropriate to proceed directly to Stage 2, examples of circumstances where a direct referral to Stage 2 is appropriate are listed below under 2.12
- 2.9.3 Exceptionally, it may be appropriate to refer a student for consideration under the Disciplinary Procedures.
- 2.9.4 In all cases, the decision to escalate to a Stage 2 support meeting will be made in partnership by the Dean of Faculty/Head of Doctoral School and the Director or Deputy Director of Student Support and Success.
- 2.9.5 If the presenting issue is not located within a Faculty, then the Director of the Professional Service (DoPS) e.g. Estates and Facilities Services would be required.
- 2.9.6 The aim of the Stage 2 support meeting is to ensure the University considers all possible support options available to the student.

2.10 Stage 2 Support Meeting

- 2.10.1 The student will receive an invite to a Stage 2 support meeting usually within 7 working days of the case being escalated to Stage 2.
- 2.10.2 The support meeting will comprise of:
- Deputy Director, Student Support and Success, or Director of Student Support and Success (SSaS) or appropriate nominee⁴ (**Chair & Lead**),
 - Head of Department (Academic)/ Director of Professional Service (DoPS)/Head of Doctoral School
 - Lead staff member from stage 1 (where a case has come directly to Stage 2 a lead person should be appointed by the Dean of Faculty/ Head of Doctoral School/ Director SSaS)
 - Student Support and Success Advisor (SSSA) (**Notetaker**)
 - Other representative from Student Support and Success (if appropriate)
- 2.10.3 The student may be accompanied in a supportive capacity, in addition to enabling the student to be supported by a professional support worker at the meeting.
- 2.10.4 If a student is unable to attend the Stage 2 meeting, due to exceptional circumstances, for which evidence has been provided, or chooses not to attend, they will have the option to nominate a member of staff to represent them, or to request that a member of the Students' Union executive attend in their place. If they choose not to have someone attend in their absence the meeting will still go ahead. It may be that the chair of the meeting is unable to determine a full programme of supportive action, but it is preferable to start the process and amend it subsequently, when the student is able to engage with the process.
- 2.10.5 The invitation will usually provide a minimum of 5 days' notice and will include the following:
- Purpose of the meeting
 - Attendees invited
 - Link to the [guidance webpage](#)
 - Request for any evidence required for the meeting.

⁴ Appropriate nominees would be Heads of Service within the Student Support and Success department.

2.10.6 Prior to the meeting the University may seek additional information relevant to the student's circumstances from parties other than the student.

2.11 Possible outcomes at Stage 2

- a. No further action - situation resolved
- b. Enhanced action plan
- c. Lowering to Stage 1
- d. Approved temporary leave of absence (no longer than 3 weeks)
- e. Continuation of studies but temporary ban from site
- f. Recommendation for additional support services
- g. Recommendation to Dean and/or PVC for interruption of studies
- h. Recommendation that the student is subject to Disciplinary Procedures
- i. Recommendation that the student is withdrawn
- j. Any other appropriate action

2.11.1 Within 7 working days of the meeting, the Notetaker shall write up notes of the discussion on the support meeting (using the [Action Plan Template](#)) and save it in the relevant Support to Study MS Teams Group. (relevant departmental channel and files tab).

2.11.2 A copy of the action plan should be emailed to the student within 7 working days of the meeting.

2.11.3 The email should advise that the student has 7 days from the date sent to reply to confirm acceptance of the meeting outcome and that, should they not reply the University will assume the student understands and accepts the content of the action plan.

2.11.4 The intention is to encourage the student to respond positively to the Action Plan and access the outlined support and modify their behaviour accordingly, as appropriate.

2.11.5 Should the student not respond to the Action Plan, then the Chair shall discuss the situation with the other members of the meeting with a view to determining next steps.

2.12 Examples of when a direct referral to Stage 2 could occur

- a) where a health care professional/occupational health advisor considers that the health, wellbeing and ability to study is significantly affected by the student's condition;
- b) when all other options to deal with the situations have been explored locally and a wider University perspective is required;
- c) when a higher stage of decision making and authority is required;
- d) where there are serious concerns regarding risk to the health and safety of the student and/or where there is a perceived threat and risk to others;
- e) where an immediate temporary suspension is considered to be in the best interests of the student or the University

2.13 Exceptional Circumstances – Interruption without a support meeting

2.13.1 In very rare circumstances, members of the Executive Leadership Team may take immediate action to enact a temporary interruption of studies without the requirement for a Stage 2 Support to Study Meeting being convened.

2.13.2 Examples of when such a decision would be taken would include:

- serious risk to life;
- unacceptable impact upon the daily business of the University or University community.

2.13.3 Such a decision would be taken following advice from the Dean of Faculty/Head of Doctoral School and Director of Student Support and Success (or their nominee).

2.14 Appeals

2.14.1 Students have a right to appeal if the outcome of Support to Study is a requirement to interrupt or withdraw from registration. Students should appeal to the Academic Registrar via email within 10 working days of the date of the outcome letter.

2.14.2 An appeal route by email to the Vice Chancellor's office will exist for students temporarily interrupted via the process outlined in section 2.13. Students should contact the Vice Chancellor's office within 10 working days of the date of the outcome letter.

2.15 Returning to Study Following Support to Study Recommended Interruption

2.14.1 Following a period of absence from the University, it may be appropriate for the student to return to study. Registry shall write to students who are coming to the end of their interruption of studies to instigate any return to studies.

2.14.2 The University may require the student to produce appropriate confirmation of their physical or mental health and ability to resume studying.

2.14.3 What is deemed appropriate confirmation in any individual case shall be decided upon by the members of the Support to Study Panel, which may vary depending on the level of action reached at the time of the student's suspension, interruption or leave of absence.

2.14.4 Normally this shall include at least one 'Request for medical evidence in relation to the student's Support to Study plan' to be completed and submitted. (see Appendix 2)

2.14.5 If it would be beneficial for the student to live away from home in order to study, a member of the Housing Team can be invited to join the Support to Study Meeting.

2.14.6 The University may wish to encourage the student to live in a particular type of University housing in order to ensure that the best support is available, even if the student is not in their first year of study.

2.14.7 The Programme Leader/Director of Studies, in conjunction with the Support to Study Panel, or appropriate colleagues from Student Support and Success where an interruption has taken place without a panel, shall draw up a 'Return to Study Plan' (see Appendix 3) in consultation with the student, once the appropriate confirmation of their physical or mental health and ability to resume studying has been received and approved.

2.14.8 The Return to Study Plan shall address the specific study-related support needs of the student in returning to university studies including:

- the support which is reasonably required in the short term;
- involvement of and liaison with external agencies (where appropriate);
- any longer-term support or adjustments that are reasonably required;
- any conditions that might or will apply to provision; and
- a schedule for regular review meetings to be arranged with a member of academic staff (this would be in addition to the regular PAT contact).

2.14.9 Any return to study shall be subject to the student's engagement with this process and adherence to any agreements made.

2.14.10 Other members of staff within Student Support & Success shall be available to provide advice and support to facilitate the student's transition back into the programme, particularly in relation to any action that might be required under the Equality Act 2010. This shall be arranged with the direct involvement of, or in consultation with, the Mental Wellbeing Team or the Disabilities and Inclusion Team within Student Support and Success, or with external statutory services.

2.14.11 The Return to Study Plan will be shared with the Support to Study Meeting panel members and appropriate academic colleagues.

2.15 Central Recording and Monitoring

- 2.15.1 The Deputy Director, Student Support and Success, alongside the Head of Mental Wellbeing, shall be responsible for regularly engaging with Directors of Faculty of Operations to ensure oversight of numbers of Support to Study cases being undertaken and to discuss any concerns.

3 APPENDICES

- 3.1 Appendix 1 - Record of Stage 1/2 – Notes of Support Meeting/Review ([Link](#))
- 3.2 Appendix 2 – Invitation to S2S meeting (including request for evidence) ([Link](#))
- 3.3 Appendix 3 - Return to Study Plan ([Link](#))
- 3.4 Appendix 4 - Extending Assignment Deadlines through Support to Study ([Link](#))