

SUPPORT TO STUDY PROCEDURE

April 2026

Contents

Summary.....	4
What is this document about?	4
Who is this for?.....	4
How does the University check this is followed?	4
Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?	4
Executive summary	5
Support to Study Meeting	5
Student of Concern Meeting	5
1. Introduction.....	6
2. Purpose.....	6
3. Scope	6
4. Procedure Principles.....	7
5. When to use this Procedure	8
6. Structure of the Procedure.....	8
7. Appendices	12

Document title	
Support to Study Procedure	
Document author and department	
Deputy Director (Specialist Support), Student Services	
Approving body	
UESEC	
Date of approval	
01 May 2026	
Review date	
May 2029	
Edition no.	
1 - new procedure	
ID Code	
312	
Date of effect	
August 2026	
For a) public access online internet or b) staff only intranet?	A. B or both
External queries relating to the document to be referred in the first instance to the Corporate Governance team: email corporate-governance@port.ac.uk If you need this document in an alternative format, please email corporate.communications@port.ac.uk	

The latest version of this document is always to be found at:

<https://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-312.pdf>

Summary

What is this document about?

This document sets out the University of Portsmouth's approach to supporting students who are experiencing significant or serious concerns related to their health, wellbeing, behaviour or personal circumstances, and these are having a substantial impact on their safety, academic progress, or ability to participate effectively in university life, or on the safety and experience of others.

Who is this for?

The procedure applies to all students who are studying directly with the University of Portsmouth (including undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students) throughout their programme/period of registration with the university.

It is also relevant to all staff at the University of Portsmouth, including academic and professional services teams involved in supporting students. This procedure may also be of interest to students' supporters and external bodies such as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE).

How does the University check this is followed?

Implementation of the procedure is monitored and reviewed by the Student Risk and Safeguarding Review Group to ensure consistent practice.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

Queries related to this document should be directed to the Head of Student Wellbeing in the first instance - headofwellbeing@port.ac.uk.

Executive summary

The Support to Study Procedure sets out the university's structured, supportive and proportionate response when a student is experiencing significant or serious concerns relating to their health, wellbeing, behaviour or personal circumstances, and these concerns are having, or are likely to have, a substantial impact on their ability to study or participate safely and effectively in university life, or on the safety and experience of others.

The procedure ensures that concerns are explored collaboratively, that students understand what is expected of them, and that appropriate support and actions are agreed.

The procedure has two stages:

Support to Study Meeting

This is the first coordinated response where concerns are significant or persistent. It provides a space for the student and relevant staff to discuss the concerns, identify support needs, and agree a clear Support to Study Action Plan with specific actions, responsibilities and timescales.

Student of Concern Meeting

Where concerns remain serious or unresolved, where engagement has not been possible, or where the impact of the situation requires further coordinated consideration, the case may be referred to a Student of Concern Meeting. This is an internal university meeting involving senior staff, which reviews the situation, considers whether further support or adjustments could help, and determines whether escalation to another university procedure may be required.

Across all stages, the procedure is designed to be supportive, inclusive, transparent and non-punitive, ensuring that decisions are made fairly, consistently and with regards to the student's best interests, the safety and experience of others, and the university's wider responsibilities.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The health, mental health and wellbeing of our students, staff, and wider university community are fundamental to our success as a values-led institution. The university is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that enables students to thrive and engage fully with their studies and wider university life.
- 1.2. The Support to Study Procedure provides a coordinated, compassionate and proportionate response where a student is experiencing significant or serious concerns relating to their health, wellbeing, behaviour, or personal circumstances, and these are having a substantial impact on their ability to study or participate safely and effectively in the university community. The procedure is not intended for general wellbeing or routine welfare concerns, which should be supported through the university's standard academic and student support processes.
- 1.3. This procedure aligns with the university's safeguarding responsibilities and its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the requirement to make reasonable adjustments.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The Support to Study Procedure provides a clear and supportive framework for responding when a student's circumstances require a coordinated and formal approach beyond usual academic or student support processes. It enables concerns to be explored carefully, ensures students understand what is expected of them, and puts in place appropriate support and actions to help students make and sustain progress.
- 2.2. The procedure also sets out how the university will manage more complex or persistent situations, including the steps for reviewing progress and, where necessary, recommending escalation to other university processes.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This procedure applies to all registered University of Portsmouth students, including undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students. It also applies to students who have interrupted or suspended their studies, and students returning from an interruption where relevant concerns remain.
 - The procedure applies only where concerns are significant or serious in nature and are having, or are likely to have, a substantial impact on one or more of the following:
 - The student's own health, safety or wellbeing or that of other members of the university or wider community;
 - The student's ability to engage in their studies;
 - The teaching, learning, research and/or experience of others;
 - The effective operation of the university or a partner organisation (including placements), including the impact of behaviour on staff;
 - The level of support required from the university, where this exceeds what can reasonably be provided through usual academic or student support processes.

- 3.2. Any member of staff may raise a concern, but the decision to initiate the procedure rests with Student Services, based on whether a coordinated and formal response is required. Students may also ask that the procedure is considered in their own circumstances.
- 3.3. This procedure is distinct from the university's Fitness to Study, Fitness to Practise and Student Conduct procedures which may be considered as routes of escalation for serious or unresolved concerns.
- 3.4. The university aims to work collaboratively with students throughout the Support to Study Procedure, providing clear information, supportive dialogue and opportunities to address concerns. Where a student is unable or unwilling to engage with the Support to Study Procedure, and reasonable efforts have been made to involve them, the university may proceed in their absence. Any decisions will be based on available evidence and made with careful consideration for the student's best interests, the safety and experience of others and the university's broader obligations.

4. Procedure Principles

- 4.1. **Supportive:** Students will be supported throughout the process, with clear information about the concerns raised, what the procedure involves, and what support is available to them. Students can access independent advice and advocacy through the University of Portsmouth Students' Union (UPSU) at any stage.
- 4.2. **Inclusive:** the procedure aims to be inclusive, recognising the diverse needs of the student population, legally protected characteristics, and delivering a process free from discrimination. We commit to delivering the procedure with sensitivity and impartiality, while actively addressing any issues related to inequality, bias, or discrimination that may arise.
- 4.3. **Accessible:** the procedure aims to be accessible; students will be able to access reasonable adjustments where needed to participate in the process. This may include documentation in accessible formats, support to attend meetings upon request, and any other adjustment deemed reasonable that is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 4.4. **Dignified & Respectful:** all parties should treat each other with dignity and respect. Where the university considers an individual's actions to be unacceptable, it reserves the right to depart from the procedure, to ensure that others involved are not disadvantaged. In such circumstances, additional measures may be applied and could include modifying or restricting how the student can communicate with the university or participate in procedures, now and in the future; raising the issue as a student conduct matter.
- 4.5. **Timely:** concerns will be responded to in a timely manner, with meetings, plans and reviews arranged promptly. Timescales should be adhered to whenever possible but may be extended by the university if there are acceptable reasons for the delay.
- 4.6. **Enabling:** the aim of the procedure is to work collaboratively with the student to find a reasonable and proportionate path forward, including empowering the student to reflect and make their own decisions in relation to their studies. This may include requesting a change of status, such as suspension of studies or change of programme.

5. When to use this Procedure

- 5.1. Most concerns about a student's health, wellbeing or academic progress can be effectively supported through the university's standard academic and student support processes, without the need for the Support to Study Procedure.
- 5.2. The procedure applies only where concerns that are significant or serious in nature and are having, or are likely to have, a substantial impact on one or more of the following:
- The student's own health, safety or wellbeing or that of other members of the university or wider community;
 - The student's ability to engage in their studies;
 - The teaching, learning, research and/or experience of others;
 - The effective operation of the university or a partner organisation (including placements), including the impact of behaviour on staff;
 - The level of support required from the university, where this exceeds what can reasonably be provided through standard academic or student support processes.

These situations require a coordinated and formal response to ensure the concerns are understood, managed proportionately, and supported appropriately.

- 5.3. Staff and students should raise a concern about a student by submitting a [Raise a Concern \(RAC\) form](#). Student Services will review the information and determine the most appropriate response. A member of staff may request that the Support to Study Procedure is commenced for a student, however, the decision to initiate the procedure rests with Student Services.
- 5.4. Where concerns meet the threshold for Support to Study, Student Services will determine whether the case should proceed to a Support to Study Meeting or be referred directly to the Student of Concern Meeting. This ensures consistency and proportionality in decision making across the university.
- 5.5. Staff who are unsure whether Support to Study may be appropriate should seek advice from Student Services. Student Services can advise whether a concern should be managed through standard support routes or requires a formal Support to Study response.

6. Structure of the Procedure

- 6.1. The Support to Study Procedure has two stages. These stages apply only where concerns are significant or serious and cannot be effectively managed through the university's usual academic or student support routes.
- 6.2. The two stages are:
- i) Support to Study Meeting (first coordinated response)
 - ii) Student of Concern Meeting (formal review and potential recommendation for escalation)
- 6.3. **Support to Study Meeting - (First Stage of Support to Study)**
- 6.3.1. A Support to Study Meeting is the first coordinated response under this procedure. It is used when a student's circumstances are having, or **are likely to have, a substantial impact on**

their ability to study or participate safely and effectively in university life, or on the safety or experience of others, and where a structured, multi-perspective meeting is required.

6.3.2. **How a Support to Study Meeting is initiated:**

- A Raise a Concern (RAC) form is submitted by any member of staff;
- Student Services reviews the information and determines whether the threshold for Support to Study Meeting has been met;
 - Where the threshold is met, the case will be allocated to an appropriate Student Services area (for example, Student Wellbeing, Student Life, Residence Life or Disability Advice) to coordinate and chair the meeting.

6.3.3. **Arranging the Support to Study Meeting**

The named Student Services lead will:

- contact the student sensitively to explain the concerns that have been raised and the purpose of the meeting;
- provide clear information about the process and who will attend;
- arrange and confirm the meeting details with the student and all parties attending;
- advise the student that they may bring a supporter, such as a friend, family member or University of Portsmouth Students' Union adviser to the meeting;
- share a copy of the Support to Study Procedure and any relevant documents in advance of the meeting with the student.

6.3.4. **Who Attends a Support to Study Meeting**

The membership of the Support to Study Meeting will normally be kept deliberately small due to the sensitive nature of the concerns and to enable student participation. Attendance will usually include:

- the Student Services lead (chair)
- the student
- a supporter chosen by the student (e.g., a friend, family member, or Students' Union adviser)
- Academic representative – such as Associate Head (Students) / Programme Leader, Course Leader as appropriate

Additional staff may attend only where their involvement is necessary to support understanding of the concerns or to contribute to the Support to Study Action Plan. Any additional attendees will be agreed in advance with the student wherever possible.

6.3.5. **Purpose of the Support to Study Meeting**

The Support to Study Meeting provides an opportunity to:

- work collaboratively with the student to understand and discuss the concerns;
- hear the student's perspective, and any relevant health, wellbeing or personal context to be considered;
- consider what support or adjustments have already been offered and whether these have been effective;

- identify relevant risks across the university's fitness to study risk domains, including:
 - Risk to the student's own health, safety or wellbeing
 - Risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of others
 - Risk to academic progress
 - Risk relating to accommodation or the living environment
 - General or case-specific risks
- Agree a Support to Study Action Plan setting out goals, actions, responsibilities and timescales.

The aim is to create a collaborative plan that supports the student to make and sustain progress. The meeting will also consider next steps if the concerns cannot be mitigated within the agreed plan, including the possible need to refer the case to the Student of Concern Meeting.

The meeting will also provide space for the student to explore all options available to them in relation to their ongoing registration, including voluntary interruption of studies. Any conversation about interruption or changes to study will be handled supportively and transparently, with the student's autonomy and decision making at the centre. The Support to Study Procedure is not punitive, and these conversations should always be framed around the student's safety, wellbeing and long-term success.

6.3.6. **Following a Support to Study Meeting**

The chair will draft the Support to Study Action Plan within five working days, reflecting the agreed concerns, goals and required actions. The draft will be shared with the student for review, and any reasonable amendments will be agreed collaboratively.

Once finalised, the action plan will be shared with relevant staff responsible for agreed actions.

The chair will also schedule the Support to Study Review Meeting, normally within four weeks, unless an alternative timescale is proportionate based on the circumstances.

All documentation relating to the case conference and action plan will be stored securely in accordance with university data protection requirements.

6.3.7. **Review Meetings**

A Support to Study Review Meeting will usually take place within four weeks of the case conference, unless a different timescale has been agreed. The purpose of the review is to evaluate progress against the Support to Study Action Plan and to ensure that the agreed mitigations are having the intended effect.

A Support to Study Review Meeting will:

- Hear the student's perspective, and take account of any changes in their personal, health or wellbeing circumstances;
- Review completed, ongoing or outstanding actions;
- Identify any new or emerging concerns relevant to Support to Study;
- Update the Action Plan as needed;

- Consider whether concerns can now be managed within standard support routes.

Review meetings should remain supportive, collaborative and proportionate, with a focus on problem solving and enabling progress.

6.3.8. **Possible Outcomes of a Review Meeting**

The Review Meeting may result in one of the following outcomes:

- Continuation under the Support to Study Procedure (updated Action Plan and further reviews)
- Closure of the Support to Study Procedure where concerns have been resolved, or the agreed outcomes have been met, and where ongoing monitoring is no longer required.
- Referral to the Student of Concern Meeting where risks remain significant, the action plan has not been effective in sufficiently mitigating the concerns or the situation has deteriorated.

All decisions should be discussed transparently with the student and recorded clearly in the meeting notes and the updated Action Plan.

6.4. **Student of Concern Meeting - (Second Stage of Support to Study)**

A Student of Concern Meeting can be requested where the seriousness or immediacy of concerns means a Support to Study Meeting is not the appropriate first step or following a Support to Study Meeting or review where concerns remain significant and or serious and unmitigated.

The Student of Concern Meeting is an internal university meeting. Its purpose is to review whether all reasonable steps have been taken to support the student and to ensure that any consideration of further escalation is proportionate, evidence based, and in line with University of Portsmouth policy. Meetings will be convened on an as needed basis.

A Student of Concern Meeting should be considered where:

- Concerns remain significant or serious despite a Support to Study Meeting;
- Concerns are significant and or serious and the student is unable or unwilling to engage with the Support to Study Procedure, despite reasonable efforts to involve them;
- New information suggests a higher level of risk;
- The situation requires consideration of escalation to an alternate university procedure.

6.4.1. **Membership of the Student of Concern Meeting**

- Head of Student Wellbeing (or another Head of Service within Student Services in their absence) (Chair)
- Senior Student Casework Manager
- Associate Dean (Students)
- Student Services Case Lead (where Support to Study Meetings have occurred)

Other staff may be invited to the meeting or to provide written information where relevant.

6.4.2. Purpose of the Student of Concern Meeting

The meeting will:

- review the concerns and evidence available, including any Action Plan, progress made, and recent developments;
- assess ongoing or emerging risks;
- consider whether additional measures could reasonably mitigate the identified risks;
- determine whether the concerns can continue to be managed safely and effectively through the Support to Study Procedure, or whether escalation to another university procedure may be required.

The Student of Concern Meeting is not a panel, and it is not a disciplinary or punitive process. Its purpose is to ensure the university has taken all reasonable, proportionate steps before considering escalation.

6.4.3. Possible Outcomes

The Student of Concern Meeting may recommend:

- continued management under the Support to Study Procedure;
- referral to an alternate university procedure, such as the Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure, Fitness to Practice Procedure, or Student Conduct Procedure;
- closure of the Support to Study Procedure.

Where a decision to refer to Fitness to Study is made the relevant Head of Service representative for Student Services will make the referral and liaise with the Associate Dean (Students)/Faculty Fitness to Study Adviser, with regards to the completion of the relevant risk assessment.

Where escalation to student conduct is recommended the Senior Student Casework Manager will take this forward.

Any recommendation made by the Student of Concern Meeting will be communicated clearly and sensitively to the student, along with information about any next steps and the support available to them.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: [Support to Study Meeting Invitation Letter](#)

Appendix 2: [Support to Study Staff Guidance](#)

Appendix 3: [Support to Study Action Plan.docx](#)

University of Portsmouth
Mercantile House
Hampshire Terrace
Portsmouth PO1 2EG
United Kingdom

E: corporate-governance@port.ac.uk
W: www.port.ac.uk