The aim of the University’s Support for Study Policy is to enhance the support for any student with difficulties that have been presenting for a period of time, can no longer be effectively supported through the PT/SSO-supervisor framework and have now reached a point where their behaviour is becoming disruptive and detrimental to the learning and teaching environment for the student, their fellow students and University staff. The policy is there to provide more structured support for the student, to set up framework for the student and the School to work in and to be able to establish agreements to help with behaviour and engagement with the academic community and education provision. The policy applies to students studying on-campus or online.

University Support for Study Flow Chart

Guidelines: ‘Helping Distressed Students: a guide for University Staff’

Support for Study Stage 1

A) Cases where there are ongoing issues and the case is considered to be urgent or critical in terms of immediate impact on the health, wellbeing and safety of the student and others

Who is involved: Personal tutors, Student Support Officers, Research Supervisors, Senior Tutors, Pastoral Advisors, Directors of Teaching, and Heads of Graduate School

Identification of cases: cases for consideration will be such cases where

a) local resolution is no longer working or appropriate
b) the student’s behaviour is disruptive or intimidating to other students and staff
c) there is a genuine concern that the student is a danger to themselves (eg self-harming) or to others (violent or physical outbursts which could include shoving or pushing other students through to deliberate damage of property/facilities)

The School should contact the emergency services if there is an immediate danger to themselves or to others. The University’s procedures for crisis management should then be followed to ensure the health and safety of the student and other members of the academic community. All urgent concerns should be raised with the University Secretary or one of the Deputy Secretaries with a view to immediate suspension under the Code of Student Conduct. The College Registrar and the Head of Academic Affairs should be notified of the occurrence at the same time so that they can assist the University Secretary.

Once the critical period has passed, the Director of Teaching or Head of Graduate School should refer the case directly to Stage 2.
Support for Study Stage 2

The College Support for Study Panel is a pastoral committee. Its primary aim is the welfare of students but it also aims to support the work of Personal Tutors, Student Support Officers and other staff involved in the pastoral care of students. The College Panel will consider cases relating to students studying in that College, whether the concerns raised relate to a student’s studies or are related to non-academic activities (e.g. concerns about behaviour in halls of residence or online behaviour). The Panel may be involved in supporting students at a distance as well as on campus students.

Students will normally be referred to the Panel by a senior officer within the School as outlined above. Cases may also be referred to this Panel from the Board of Examiners and Special Circumstances Committees, or (under the Code of Student Conduct) by Conduct Investigators or Discipline Officers investigating allegations of misconduct.

Referral of cases to Stage 2

Referral from the School
Where a School feels that they have followed all possibilities available to them under Stage 1 or where they have noted a deterioration or escalation of student’s behaviour then they should refer the case to Stage 2. The referral must come from a Director of Teaching or a Head of Graduate School.

The facts of the case should be presented outlining the concerns over the student’s behaviour, health and any underlying causes and an outline as to why it is now thought necessary to escalate the case further. The Panel should be provided with any supporting medical documentation submitted and a detailed account of what steps have been taken so far to support the student.

Referral from a Discipline Officer
Where a Discipline Officer considers that the behaviour of a student may have been severely affected by health conditions or disabilities which has led to them being considered under the Code of Student Conduct, the Discipline Officer should contact the secretary of the Support for Study Panel to discuss a referral to Stage 2. The Discipline Officer must provide the secretary with a case outlining why it is they consider that the Support for Study procedures are the most appropriate route for this student. The case should contain details of the student’s behaviour, health and any declared or perceived underlying causes.

Proceedings of the Study for Support Panel

The proceedings of the Panel are set out in section 6 of the Support for Study Policy. The Panel will invite the student to a meeting to discuss the issues. The Support for Study Panel
is primarily there in a supportive role for the student and engagement with the Panel is voluntary on the student's part. However it should be noted that the Panel can proceed with its business in the absence of the student.

Once a referral has been received the Panel will meet as quickly and as often as required to conclude the matter.

**Composition**

- The College Dean of Students (Convenor) or their nominee
- A Senior Tutor or Head of Graduate School, or equivalent, from within the College
- The Director of the Student Counselling Service (or representative) or (in the case of student disability) The Director of the Student Disability Service (or their representative)
- A further member of College staff should be in attendance as a note taker (Secretary)
- Other staff may be invited to attend the panel to provide specific, additional insights or evidence

The College Office has set up a 'pool' of senior College academic staff who will be contacted on a rota basis and in accordance with their expertise for each Panel. Therefore the Panel for each student will comprise of members with a broad understanding of the context of the issues that may have arisen as a result of the student’s behaviour and a range depth of experience to provide the best outcome possible for the student.

**Possible Outcomes might be:**

- No follow-up action necessary
- Referral to appropriate support service – e.g. Health Service, Student Counselling Service, Student Disability Service, etc.
- Application for an appropriate concession – e.g. interruption of studies or a transfer to part-time study
- Adopting a case management approach coordinated by a member of staff from the appropriate professional service
- A written agreement about necessary changes to behaviour, with a review period agreed
- A record of likely consequences of any continuation of concerns, which may include referral to the Head of School for action under the Code of Student Conduct
- Where the student's behaviour appears to be in breach of the Code of Student Conduct, the Convenor of the College Panel should refer the case to the relevant Head of School for action under the Code.

**Reporting and Recording**

The Secretary of Support for Study Panel will keep a record of the cases. The details of the concerns will be held as confidential notes on the student’s record. Concessions will be recorded on the student's record in the normal manner.

The Secretary will be responsible for compiling an annual report for presentation to the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.
B) Cases where there are ongoing issues and the student is willing and able to participate in finding a resolution. The case is not considered to be urgent or critical in terms of immediate impact on the health, wellbeing and safety of the student and others

Who is involved: Personal tutors, Student Support Officers, Research Supervisors

Identification of cases: cases for consideration will be such cases where

a) one to one local resolution is no longer working or appropriate
b) the student’s behaviour is disruptive or intimidating to other students and staff
c) there is a genuine concern that the student may become a danger to themselves (eg self-harming) or to others (violent or physical outbursts which could include shoving or pushing other students through to deliberate damage of property/facilities)

Referral of cases to Stage 1

Where a PT or Supervisor or Student Support Officer has concerns over a student this should be referred to the Senior Tutor or Senior Pastoral Advisor (for PGR). A case should be presented outlining the concerns over the student’s behaviour, health and any underlying causes that have been declared or have emerged during the period of local resolution, any resolutions that have been already been explored or put in place and an outline as to why it is thought necessary to escalate the case.

The Senior Tutor/ Pastoral Advisor should invite the student in for a meeting to explore the concerns and background that has been referred to them. There must be a minimum of two members of staff present, and if appropriate an independent note taker (however the task of note taker can be delegated to the second staff member). The student should be given an opportunity to bring a member of the local community with them to the meeting if they wish.

The meeting should be constructive in nature and it should be made clear that the outcome of the meeting is to agree a way forward for the student. The student should be given the opportunity to present their own point of view, whether this is done by a written statement submitted before the meeting (this may help a student to compose their thoughts or raise issues that they would not be comfortable stating at a face to face meeting) or at the meeting itself. The student should be sent a copy of the notes taken of the meeting. The possible outcomes of the meeting are listed in the Support for Study policy section 5.2:

‘The concerns should then be discussed with the student in an informal and supportive manner. The student should be given the opportunity to explain their perception of the matter. Possible outcomes from such a discussion might include:

• No follow-up action necessary
• Referral to appropriate support service – e.g. Health Service, Student Counselling, Student Disability Service, etc.
• Application for an appropriate concession – e.g. interruption of studies or a transfer to part-time study
• An agreement about changes to behaviour, with a review period agreed, and a review undertaken by the student’s Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team
• An agreement about a review period/further discussion undertaken by the student’s Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team.’
A time frame for any actions and a means of communication should be agreed. It would be appropriate in most cases to agree a second meeting (or a series of meetings) where progress can be reviewed. It is important to ensure that a student is made aware of why the University is asking them to participate with the support framework put in place and that they are aware that there may be consequences if they do not engage.

It is envisaged that this stage should take between 6 – 12 weeks to allow for the student to engage with support services etc. and to re-engage with their studies in an appropriate manner.

C) Cases where there are ongoing issues where the student is unwilling or refuses to engage with support mechanisms or is unable to participate. However the case is not considered to be urgent or critical in terms of immediate impact on the health, wellbeing and safety of the student and others

Who is involved: Senior Tutors, Pastoral Advisors, Directors of Teaching, and Head of Graduate Schools

Identification of cases: cases for consideration will be where:

a) the student will not engage with the School frontline support, or stops engaging in any attempt, to resolve issues
b) there is a repeated pattern of unacceptable behaviour or there is no improvement in the student’s behaviour
c) the student’s behaviour is escalating or deteriorating

Where any or all of the above is occurring the Senior Tutor or Senior Pastoral Advisor (for PGR) should discuss the case with the Director of Teaching (DoT) or Head of Graduate School (HoGS). The facts of the case should be presented outlining the concerns over the student’s behaviour, health and any underlying causes and an outline as to why it is now thought necessary to escalate the case further in the School.

The DoT or HoGS should review the case and investigate with the School’s support team if there could be any additional or alternative support could reasonably be put in place. The DoT or HoGS should seek advice from the University’s Student Counselling or Student Disability Service and the College office if appropriate.

i. If the student agrees to participate in an alternative arrangement a timeframe and follow up mechanisms should be agreed. If the further arrangements do not resolve the problems or the student does not engage with them fully, the case should be referred to Stage 2. It is envisaged that this should take between 8 - 12 weeks.

ii. If a student does not attend or is unwilling to engage with an alternative arrangement the case should be referred to Stage 2 the DoT or HoGS should refer the case to Stage 2.