

Document Details

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Version control

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1.1	24/01/2023	Sarah Sweeney, Head fo Student Support and Wellbeing. Changes include: inclusion of the Students of Concern Review Team referral process to the Supported Study and Fitness to Study Procedures; extension of deadline for notification of outcomes; change to the authorisers for the Temporary Exclusion Process; addition of a clear Appeals process; further clarification of the Return to Study process; addition of list of alternative delegated authorities for key roles in the process; and clarification on the use of risk assessments within the procedures.

Referenced policies and documents

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) at Lancaster University

[Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

[Dignity in Student Life Policy](#)

[Student Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

Lancaster University [Disabled Student Policy](#)

[Student Discipline Regulations](#)

[Students' Charter](#)

Lancaster University

Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policy

1. Aim

- 1.1 The aim of this Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policy is to enable students to remain at University and successfully complete their programme of study (programme of study refers to all undergraduate programmes, postgraduate taught programmes, postgraduate research programmes and other programmes of study). The Policy aims to ensure consistent and fair treatment of students in situations where their health or wellbeing is at risk, or where a student's continuation presents a risk to the health and wellbeing of other students or staff. The policy enables the University to discharge its duty of care to all parties effectively and manage risk.

2. Context

- 2.1 Lancaster University is strongly committed to supporting its diverse body of students. Our goal is to support students' progress and success wherever possible and appropriate in a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment.
- 2.2 We put in place reasonable adjustments and focused, appropriate support with clear boundaries to ensure students and applicants declaring disabling conditions or long-term mental or physical health issues have equal opportunities to succeed in all aspects of University life.
- 2.3 It is expected that departments and colleges will work with students to address any emerging problems as early as possible as a preliminary stage to this policy. We will seek to provide targeted and coordinated support from departments, colleges and Student and Education Services, with clear boundaries, and engaging with other external partners as necessary. This is to help the student stay or get back on track towards their academic goals, studying and engaging with the University with appropriate support in place.
- 2.4 This policy should only be implemented if the initial level of help and support is proved not sufficient and more structured support is needed requiring specialist or cross-institutional level intervention. It is normally in the best interests of the student to act early; this policy sets out the triggers that should be used to recognise where further actions are needed through the Supported Study Policy. The Fitness to Study procedures should only be used in exceptional circumstances when other approaches to support have not been effective or have/would not meet the needs of the individual and/or the wider University community. These exceptional circumstances may include situations where there is no engagement from the student, no willingness by the student to work with the University or where there are identifiable significant risks to the University.
- 2.5 At all times, academic standards will be protected and the primary purpose of student status, which is to be able to engage productively with their studies or research, will be maintained.

- 2.6 This Policy is not disciplinary (where the student incurs disciplinary penalties) but designed to support students whose fitness to study is called into question or who need additional non-academic support in their studies or research. Where students do not wish to engage or fail to comply with conditions placed on them to safeguard their wellbeing or that of others, actions taken by the University under this policy may seem to be punitive but should not be confused with disciplinary penalties which will only be used if a student's behaviour is in breach of the [Student Discipline Regulations](#).
- 2.7 In the event where there is an overlap with other policies and procedures of the University, and an action or omission by a student could potentially be considered under more than one process, the University will determine how best to proceed in the best interests of the student/applicant, of expediency and of natural justice. Procedures may be combined, run in parallel or run in series. The Associate Director (Student Wellbeing and Inclusion) will consult with the Director of Student, Education and Academic Services (or nominee) to determine the best course of action and ensure that the student and relevant staff are advised of how the processes will be conducted.
- 2.8 Wherever possible we will work with the student in a spirit of support and collaboration and will seek to reach a mutually acceptable outcome.
- 2.9 All processes followed will meet the requirements for handling sensitive personal data, in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Process records, including risk assessments and minutes from panel meetings, will be stored confidentially by Student and Education Services and managed in line with the University's data retention schedules.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 "Fitness" refers to health and also to suitability, including capability, capacity and behaviour.
- 3.2 A student or applicant would typically be expected to:
- (i) be able to function independently in the academic environment and the wider University environment; and
 - (ii) not exhibit any mental or physical health needs that unreasonably disrupt the learning/research/work of other students or staff; and
 - (iii) be able to benefit from the programme of study/research and pursue for the required period with a reasonable chance of academic progression; and
 - (iv) be able to concentrate for significant periods of time; and
 - (v) be able to undertake private and independent study/research; and
 - (vi) be able to engage with other students and staff in joint activities if required as part of their programme of study/research; and
 - (vii) be able to receive and respond appropriately to critical appraisal of work; and
 - (viii) be self-aware, able to maintain their own safety and seek support from appropriate services when required; and
 - (ix) be able to do the above and to follow policies and procedures with reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Failure to satisfy one or more of the above criteria should not be understood as meaning that a student or applicant is not fit to study, but may lead to consideration of the need to follow the Supported Study or of Fitness to Study procedures.

- 3.3 Students and applicants are deemed *not* fit to study when:
- (i) there is sufficient evidence from clinical and non-clinical sources to make an assessment that continuation is detrimental to the student/applicant's health and/or poses a risk to the wider staff or student community; and/or
 - (ii) reasonable adjustments and support offered are shown to be not sufficient to enable independent engagement;¹ and/or
 - (iii) the student/applicant is unable/chooses not to engage with reasonable adjustments and support offered; and/or
 - (iv) the student/applicant is unable to maintain their own safety and does not, or is not able to seek support from appropriate services when required; and/or
 - (v) the student/applicant's presentation is disruptive in a way that impacts significantly on the study/work/engagement/safety of other students or staff of the University.
- 3.4 Deferral of enrolment: formal enrolment at the University is deferred until an agreed date.
- 3.5 Intercalation: a suspension of studies, usually due to mitigating circumstances, which has to be formally approved by the University.
- 3.6 Temporary exclusion: a student is required to be temporarily removed from their programme of study/research and/or their university accommodation for an agreed period, pending further appropriate investigations and/or a Fitness to Study Panel meeting, usually used for a person whose continued presence on University premises is deemed to constitute a threat to the health and wellbeing of themselves or others.
- 3.7 Permanent exclusion: a student is permanently excluded from their programme of study/ research and their university accommodation (if relevant).
- 3.8 Students of Concern Review Team (SCRT): a cross-functional team established to share information and take a cross-team approach to supporting students who are displaying concerning, disruptive or distressed behaviour, or students who are unable to manage University life independently, despite all reasonable adjustments in place. The Students of Concern Review Team is primarily an information sharing and advisory group with representatives from key student support services.

¹ A student's impairment of their fitness or ability to study will be considered by the Disability Service and if this constitutes a disability the student will be offered reasonable adjustments and support.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all students enrolled on an undergraduate programme, postgraduate taught programme, postgraduate research programme or other programme of study offered by Lancaster University with the Bailrigg campus as their primary affiliation; this includes students of the INTO University Partnership. Students studying through other partnership arrangements will be subject to local fitness to study or equivalent procedures.
- 4.2 This policy also applies to applicants with accepted offers to undergraduate, postgraduate taught/research or other programmes offered by Lancaster University with the Bailrigg campus as their primary affiliation, including applicants of the INTO University Partnership programmes.
- 4.3 The Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policies should only be used where students require support or intervention beyond the remit of standard procedures (e.g. reasonable adjustments, academic or college interventions).
- 4.4 Concerns about a student's Fitness to Study may be raised from any source, including any member of staff, student, placement partner, or other agencies such as the Police or Social Services. Concerns should be raised by contacting Student Wellbeing Services at SCRT@lancaster.ac.uk or completing the referral form at <https://forms.office.com/r/AFmCCwXw3x>

5. Supported Study

- 5.1 This Policy covers two processes.
 - Supported Study: where serious concerns have been raised about whether a student is 'fit to study' but the student may benefit from an integrated package of support provided by clinical and specialist staff known as a 'Supported Study Agreement' to enable them to continue with their programme of study.
 - Fitness to Study: where very serious concerns have been raised about whether a student is 'fit to study' and Supported Study is not considered sufficient to mitigate the risk to the student's health and wellbeing or risk to the health and wellbeing of other students and staff.
- 5.2 We shall normally engage with the student through the Supported Study procedures prior to initiating Fitness to Study procedures. However, depending on the nature/severity of the concerns and the student's own response to the situation, we may initiate Fitness to Study Procedures directly without any prior agreement from the student or any requirement to commence or exhaust Supported Study procedures first.
- 5.3 In this Policy, 'Supported Study' refers to academic study and other areas of University life. The aim of Supported Study is to enable the student to engage and progress without undue impact on their wellbeing or that of others, and to ensure that plans are in place for mitigation and management of risks where possible.

- 5.4 We shall initiate Supported Study procedures when we perceive that standard procedures (e.g. reasonable adjustments, academic or college interventions) are insufficient, and/or when the student is not engaging with the interventions offered by the University and/or external services.
- 5.5 The Supported Study Policy sets out the means by which the University exercises its authority, following due process, to change terms and conditions as set out in the [Student Contract](#).
- 5.6 We shall inform the student when commencing Supported Study procedures and seek to involve them in the process.
- 5.7 Supported Study procedures will normally lead to a Supported Study Agreement, developed with the student and relevant others. This will record: support available; agreed actions; responsibilities; remits and boundaries. The Supported Study Agreement should also clarify the next steps if the student/applicant does not engage, or if concerns remain for the student/applicant's wellbeing despite adherence to the Supported Study Agreement. In many cases the next step in this scenario may be a move to the 'Fitness to Study' process.
- 5.8 Supported Study requires the engagement, commitment and co-operation of the departments identifying concern, relevant central services, relevant colleges, the student/applicant and any external services/agencies.
- 5.9 Where a student or applicant refuses or is unable to engage with Supported Study at any stage, other procedures or policies (e.g. academic progress, accommodation regulations, discipline, Fitness to Study) may be initiated as appropriate.

6. Fitness to Study

6.1 Where a student or applicant:

- does not meet the definition of fit to study above; and
- does meet the definition of *not* fit to study above; and
- Supported Study procedures have not been or would not be sufficient to allow them to be defined as fit to study.

The University has the authority to require deferral of enrolment, intercalation, temporary exclusion or permanent exclusion through the Fitness to Study process. The authority to approve such a decision rests with the Chair of the Fitness to Study Panel. Student and Education Services Division is responsible for managing the Fitness to Study process: [Fitness to Study procedures](#).

- 6.2 Fitness to Study procedures must always include consideration of any appropriate support, reasonable adjustments or actions that might enable the student or applicant to meet the requirements of Fitness to Study.
- 6.3 All Fitness to Study cases are considered and discussed confidentially by a Fitness to Study Panel.

- 6.4 A student/applicant must have an opportunity to engage with the procedures and present evidence. If they so choose they can nominate a support person to accompany them or represent them in any meetings. They will also be advised to seek support from Lancaster University Students' Union (LUSU) for further guidance during the Fitness to Study Process.
- 6.5 The chair of the Fitness to Study Panel may require deferral of enrolment, intercalation, temporary exclusion (and potentially remote study if this is an option) or permanent exclusion.
- 6.6 The Fitness to Study Panel may request independent evidence that the student is 'not fit to study'; an assessment from an independent health/mental health advisor can be requested if appropriate. The student/applicant will be required to give their consent to share the report from the independent assessment.
- 6.7 A requirement for permanent exclusion would only be made where there is compelling evidence that the student/applicant will not be fit to return to the current programme of study at any time in the future. There is no prohibition on a student/applicant applying to the University again in the future, provided that they can demonstrate fitness to study (a re-evaluation of the student/applicant's fitness to study may be required).
- 6.8 If the Fitness to Study Panel requires deferral of enrolment, intercalation, temporary exclusion or permanent exclusion, then the student/applicant's access to campus, including accommodation and University services and events (both physical and online), can be withdrawn at this stage. This will be implemented in a supportive manner.
- 6.9 The student/applicant can appeal against the decision if they believe that the Fitness to Study Panel did not consider evidence provided, did not follow the procedures appropriately or there was failure to meet natural justice. Appeals must be submitted in line with the appeals procedure set out in Section 6 of the Supported Study and Fitness to Study Procedures below and within 10 working days of notification of the Panel recommendation.
- 6.10 Prior to returning from a required intercalation/deferred enrolment, the student/applicant will need to meet the requirements of the Return to Study procedure, demonstrating stabilisation of their health, and the ability to manage their symptoms and seek appropriate support when required. The student/applicant's 'fitness to study' will be assessed by a senior member of the Student Wellbeing Services team, reviewing the requirements of the original Fitness to Study Panel (see 'Return to Study' procedure below). Where the University, advised by Student Wellbeing Services in the Student and Education Services division, deems it necessary, it will commission an independent medical/health specialist to make an assessment of the student/applicant's suitability for a return to study. The student/applicant will be required to give their consent to share the report from the independent assessment. Before allowing a student/applicant to return, the University expects to be able to evidence that there are no serious concerns regarding the health and safety of the student/applicant or the risk to others.

7. Management of Risk

7.1 The University has a responsibility to manage the risks faced by its staff, students and visitors and to fulfil its duty of care to staff and students as well as manage any risk to its reputation. The University does this through a process of risk assessment. The normal expectation would be that risk assessment is required in situations where:

- there is a risk of harm to self or others;
- there are safeguarding issues involved;
- there is a serious risk to the University's legal or financial position, reputational risk or other aspects of the University's business;
- the Police, NHS or other external authorities are involved.

7.2 Risk assessments will always be carried out as part of the Supported Study and Fitness to Study Process, and as a consequence of the risk assessment, precautionary actions may be implemented to reduce the levels of risk. Risk assessments will remain confidential to the Supported Study and/or Fitness to Study Panel.

7.3 If a student poses an immediate risk to themselves or others then immediate action should be taken and emergency services should be contacted where necessary. The University is not an emergency service and if a student's behaviour appears to pose a risk to life, staff and students are advised to call an ambulance. Once the immediate risk has been removed the student should, as appropriate, be considered under the sections of this policy.

8. Review of Policy

8.1 Student and Education Services will keep the implementation of this policy under review, monitor its use annually and bring material matters for consideration, as required, to the Student Experience Committee.

8.2 The Associate Director (Student Wellbeing and Inclusion)/Head of Student Support and Wellbeing have delegated authority to make minor changes to the policy wording and content. Such changes will be reported to the Student Experience Committee.

Lancaster University

Supported Study and Fitness to Study Procedures

1. Supported Study Procedures

- 1.1 Where concerns about fitness to study mean a student/applicant is considered/expected not to be able to progress academically and/or live independently and harmoniously with others (with reasonable adjustments as appropriate), the University may initiate Supported Study procedures.
- 1.2 Concerns about a student's fitness to study should be raised with the Students of Concern Review Team (SCRT@lancaster.ac.uk) in the first instance. The referring party will be required to complete an SCRT referral form to detail key concerns about the student/applicant. If necessary, the Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will consult with the student/applicant's department, college and other University support services, as appropriate to gather further information. The student/applicant's referral will be triaged by a senior manager within Student Wellbeing Services. If they agree that substantive concerns about a student's fitness to study have been raised, they will refer the case to the SCRT for consideration for either a 'Supported Study Agreement' or a 'Fitness to Study Panel Meeting'. SCRT will make a recommendation to the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee).
- 1.3 Though the intention is to limit the amount of sharing of personal information outside the SCRT meetings, there are occasions when it is in the interests of the student to discuss their case with staff outside the usual SCRT group (such as accommodation services, college team or academic department). In these instances, SCRT will carefully consider which staff are informed of student cases in an effort to maintain high levels of confidentiality and only share information which staff need to know to support effective assessment of risk and provision of support for the student.
- 1.4 As an outcome of the SCRT referral, the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) will make a final decision as to whether or not to formally initiate the Supported Study process. If the student's needs can be met outside of the Supported Study process the Student Wellbeing Coordinator (or nominee) will ensure that the student/applicant is referred and signposted to the relevant services.
- 1.5 If the decision is made by the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) to initiate the Supported Study process, the Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will convene a Supported Study Panel meeting (in person or online), ideally to take place within 10 working days of the decision to initiate the Supported Study procedure. The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will request that a risk assessment is completed for the student by an appropriately qualified member of the Student Wellbeing Services team (usually a member of the Counselling and Mental Health Service or Disability Service).

- 1.6 The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will be a member of Student and Education Services staff. They will coordinate the Supported Study Panel meeting to include as relevant:
- representative of academic department;
 - College and/or accommodation representative;
 - Admissions representative (if an applicant);
 - Transitions Team and/or Disability Service representative;
 - Counselling and Mental Health Service representative;
 - representative of any other department/University service expressing concern;
 - external services as appropriate.
- 1.7 The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will inform the student/applicant that the University is initiating Supported Study procedures. This discussion will take place at least 2 working days prior to the Supported Study Panel meeting. The Student Casework Officer will discuss the following with the student:
- (i) the purpose of the Supported Study process;
 - (ii) the membership of the group to work with the student;
 - (iii) the need to share information within the Panel group;
 - (iv) whether or not the student wishes to meet with the Panel;
 - (v) what issues the student perceives/wishes to address.
- If the student does not wish to attend the Supported Study Panel meeting, the Student Casework Officer will present the student's view of their situation and any requests they may have.
- 1.8 The Supported Study Panel will:
- (i) identify problems, challenges and issues causing concern;
 - (ii) consider steps that have already been taken to address these issues;
 - (iii) consider next steps and how to support the student to engage with their academic programme and university life while effectively managing their health, wellbeing and behaviour. Discussion of the support required will include identifying clear roles, responsibilities and boundaries for the student and for staff involved. The support provided should be compassionate and also focussed, appropriate and boundaried, aiming to support the student's primary purpose of progressing in their programme of study.
- 1.9 The Supported Study Panel must pay due attention to equality and diversity considerations, academic integrity and the wellbeing of the student and others in their community.
- 1.10 Following the Supported Study Panel Meeting, a Supported Study Agreement will be drafted and circulated to the members of the Panel and the student/applicant within 2 working days of the meeting. The Supported Study Agreement will contain:

- (i) the actions and support recommended by the Supported Study Panel;
- (ii) the responsibilities of the student to engage with the requirements of the Supported Study Agreement;
- (iii) relevant dates and timescales for review of the Supported Study Agreement;
- (iv) consequences of non-compliance.

1.11 The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will contact the student/applicant and they will both formally approve the agreement as a change to the student's terms and conditions. At this point the Student Casework Officer or nominee will need to consider whether the Supported Study Agreement needs to be shared with any other members of staff or services which may be relevant to implementation of the plan, and consult with both the student/applicant and the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) prior to sharing.

1.12 The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will oversee the progress of the Supported Study Agreement and will meet with the student/applicant at intervals agreed as laid out within the document to monitor how effectively the support plan is working for the student/applicant.

1.13 The Supported Study Agreement will be reviewed regularly by the Student Casework Officer (or nominee), based on discussion with the student. As a minimum the Agreement should be reviewed at least once per academic term. At each review consideration should be given to whether the Agreement needs to be amended and whether it is appropriate to exit the Supported Study process. If the student/applicant and Student Casework Officer (or nominee) are in agreement that the Supported Study process is no longer required, the Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will present the Supported Study Agreement complete with an updated risk assessment and review notes to the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) for final sign off on closure of the process. If a student/applicant remains on a Supported Study plan for longer than 12 months, consideration should be given to the Fitness to Study Procedures.

2. Fitness to Study Procedures

2.1 Whenever possible, the University will seek to find ways of supporting a student/applicant to continue to independently engage and progress with their studies, through the Supported Study process. The University will only consider required deferral of enrolment, intercalation, temporary or permanent exclusion of a student/applicant where the student has not been able to engage with the Supported Study process for any reason, including reasons of health and wellbeing, the student has not complied with the terms of their Supported Study Agreement, where continuation with study is not possible within the bounds of academic integrity or professional standards (for some departments), or in situations where the University considers that a student is not fit to study and should be temporarily removed from accommodation and/or their programme of study/research, either in their own interest or to protect the health and wellbeing of other students or staff.

- 2.2 The University can initiate Fitness to Study procedures where a student or applicant does not meet the definition of fit to study (above) and/or does meet the definition of *not* fit to study.
- 2.3 Academic progress is not in itself an indication that a student/applicant is fit to study (see definitions above); breaches in the student code of conduct are also not in themselves an indication that a student/applicant is not fit to study.
- 2.4 Staff or external agencies who have concerns that a student/applicant is not fit to study should raise their concerns with Student Wellbeing Services by emailing SCRT@lancaster.ac.uk and completing the referral form. The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will gather information and present the case to the Students of Concern Review Team and Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) for consideration with a clear proposal.
- 2.5 The Students of Concern Review Team and Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) will consider the case, reviewing any support already in place to establish whether Supported Study would be a more appropriate route. In addition, the Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will explore whether the possibility of voluntary intercalation has been discussed with the student. If it has not, the Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will meet with the student to discuss both the concerns raised and the option of voluntary intercalation.
- 2.6 Consideration will be given at this stage to whether it is appropriate to temporarily remove the student from their accommodation (if the student is in University accommodation) and/or their programme of study. Should this be deemed necessary then the procedures for **Temporary Exclusion** as detailed below in section 3 should be followed.
- 2.7 If the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) decides that the Fitness to Study process is appropriate, they will ask the Student Casework Officer (or nominee) to convene a Fitness to Study Panel meeting (in person or online) to take place within 10 working days of that decision.
- 2.8 The Fitness to Study Panel meeting will be chaired by the Associate Director (Student Wellbeing and Inclusion) or nominee and panel members may include (as relevant):
- (i) senior representative of academic department (with authority to speak on behalf of department);
 - (ii) Admissions team representative (if an applicant);
 - (iii) Mental Health Practitioner;
 - (iv) Disability/Transitions Team practitioner;
 - (v) College and/or accommodation representative;
 - (vi) Student Registry representative;
 - (vii) others as relevant (for example another academic representative, external medical or social work representative).

The Fitness to Study Panel should not include any members who have previously been involved in a Supported Study Panel for the student. At least one member of the Panel should be a person with appropriate seniority who has not been involved with the student case previously. The Panel should include a minimum of three members and not exceed more than five people, including the chair. A minute taker will also be present.

- 2.9 The student/applicant can attend the Fitness to Study Panel meeting if they wish and/or are able to engage in an appropriate manner. The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will encourage the student to seek support from LUSU in all Fitness to Study cases. The student can nominate a support person to accompany them to the meeting or to represent them as well as a LUSU advisor if they choose to engage with LUSU support. The student/applicant cannot be represented by a lawyer acting in a professional capacity.
- 2.10 There may be occasions where it is not possible or not appropriate for the student/applicant to attend the meeting themselves (e.g. if they are currently in hospital). In this case the Panel meeting may go ahead and the student must be given the opportunity to send a representative in their place and/or provide a written statement to the Panel. If a student/applicant is unexpectedly unable to attend the Panel meeting, the Student Casework Officer will attempt to rearrange the meeting to provide the student/applicant with an opportunity to attend. If the student/applicant subsequently cannot attend this second meeting, the Panel may be held in their absence and the student will be notified of this arrangement beforehand and offered the opportunity to submit a statement.
- 2.11 The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will contact the student/applicant and communicate to them that Fitness to Study procedures have been initiated. This discussion will be at least 5 working days prior to the Fitness to Study Panel Meeting (see 2.7 above). The Student Casework Officer will use a template to guide the discussion and will explain:
- the purpose of the Fitness to Study Panel;
 - the membership of the panel;
 - the need to share information with the Panel;
 - whether or not the student wishes to attend the Fitness to Study panel meeting;
 - what issues the student perceives/wishes to address/what outcome is being sought;
 - the possibility of deferring or intercalating.
- 2.12 The student can submit written evidence from themselves and/or others at least 2 full working days prior to the meeting.
- 2.13 The Student Casework Officer or nominee will draft a risk assessment which sets out why the student is considered not fit to study and circulate it to the panel members at least 2 full working days prior to the meeting.
- 2.14 The Chair of the Fitness to Study Panel will present the risk assessment and any evidence from the student and other parties to the Fitness to Study Panel. The Fitness to Study Panel will consider the student/applicant's ability and capacity (with the appropriate support and reasonable adjustments in place) to engage with University procedures,

academic work and other situations in line with the definitions of fit to study above. The Panel will also consider the student's financial situation, including liability for tuition fees and accommodation fees, and consider what financial support is available to the student.

- 2.15 The Panel may decide that Supported Study has a reasonable chance of resolving the issues identified and draw up a Supported Study Agreement as outlined in the procedures above.
- 2.16 Consensus is the preferred method of decision making. Where this is not possible, the Chair of the Panel will make the decision, based on the criteria of the policy and the advice of panel members.
- 2.17 If the Panel considers that a student/applicant cannot meet the definitions of fit to study with focussed, reasonable, appropriate and boundaried support, they may require deferral of enrolment, intercalation, temporary exclusion or permanent exclusion. The appropriate outcome will be determined based on the need to support the student and to minimise the risk of harm to self or others.
- 2.18 The Student Casework Officer or nominee will inform the student/applicant of the agreed outcome, usually within 5 working days of the original Fitness to Study Panel meeting. In some instances, for example where further guidance is needed, an outcome may take longer but the University will endeavour to communicate with the student throughout this process.
- 2.19 The Chair of the Fitness to Study Panel will sign a letter confirming the outcome to be emailed to the student/applicant. The University shall impose the deferral of enrolment/intercalation/temporary exclusion/permanent exclusion with immediate effect.
- 2.20 The relevant parties in the University will ensure the implementation of the Panel's decision is carried out in a supportive manner.

3. Temporary Exclusion of a Student subject to Fitness to Study Procedure

- 3.1 The Fitness to Study Procedure contains provision for temporary exclusion of a student in an exceptional situation where, in exercising our reasonable judgement, the University determines it is in the student's 'vital interests' to do so; this means:
 - in serious or life and death situations;
 - situations where significant harm to the student or others is likely to occur;
 - situations where the student has been involved in, or that there is a risk of, an incident or an emergency situation where the University believes the student or others may come to serious or lasting harm.
- 3.2 In these exceptional situations where the University considers that a student is not fit to study and should be temporarily removed from accommodation and/or their programme of study/research, either in their own interest or to protect the health and wellbeing of other students or staff, the University can follow the Temporary Exclusion of a Student procedure, which allows the University to temporarily remove a student for a period of up to thirty days, pending further appropriate investigations and/or a Fitness to Study Panel meeting. The procedure for initiating a temporary exclusion is as follows.

- (i) A risk assessment needs to be completed by an appropriately qualified member of Student and Education Services staff and approved by the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing or nominee. This risk assessment must evidence the need for a temporary exclusion.
- (ii) The risk assessment will be shared electronically and securely with the following two people or their nominees: the Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary and the Director of Student, Education and Academic Services.
- (iii) If both parties are not in agreement with the decision to temporarily exclude the student, then the Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will arrange for these individuals to meet and discuss the case together.
- (iv) If there is agreement over the decision to temporarily exclude the student, a letter signed by the Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary will be sent to the student. This letter will advise the student of the decision to invoke a temporary exclusion under the Fitness to Study procedure.
- (v) Upon notification, the student will be encouraged to request LUSU advice and support for their Fitness to Study case. The student will also be directed to the Fitness to Study appeals process.

3.3 Although the temporary exclusion can last up to 30 days, a temporary exclusion should last no longer than is needed and consideration must be given to the impact any exclusion might have on the student's academic progress and wellbeing. However the temporary exclusion may be extended should the need arise.

3.4 It is expected that the Fitness to Study process will be initiated as soon as possible and no later than 2 working days after the temporary exclusion is approved.

4. Required intercalation

4.1 If a student is required by the Fitness to Study Panel to intercalate, the intercalation process is initiated by Student Wellbeing Services.

4.2 When a student intercalates, they must vacate any campus accommodation within 28 days. The 28 day notice period begins from the date formal approval is given for the required intercalation.

4.3 The [standard conditions for intercalation](#) apply to all students required to intercalate under the Fitness to Study policy. The Fitness to Study Panel may also specify conditions that must be met before the student can return to study following the required intercalation.

4.4 Student Registry will record the student as intercalated, ensure all relevant parties are informed and liaise with the Student Wellbeing Services team before initiating the Return to Study process.

5. Return to Study procedures

- 5.1 Following a required deferral of enrolment or period of intercalation or temporary exclusion, students/applicants will be required to demonstrate that they are fit to study by providing satisfactory evidence of their fitness to return from a recognised independent health professional with sufficient knowledge of the wellbeing of the student during the period of deferral/intercalation/temporary exclusion. The student/applicant will be required to give their consent to share the report from the independent assessment.
- 5.2 The student/applicant must provide evidence demonstrating stabilisation of their health, and the ability to manage their symptoms/behaviour and seek appropriate support when required. An appropriately qualified member of Student Wellbeing Services staff will review the evidence provided by the student. Where the University, advised by Student Wellbeing Services, deems it necessary, it will commission an independent medical/health specialist to make an assessment of the student/applicant's suitability for a return to study. Fitness to study will be assessed in line with the definition of 'fit to study' above. Before allowing a student/applicant to return, the University expects to be able to evidence that there are no serious concerns regarding the health and safety of the student/applicant or the risk to others.
- 5.3 The member of Student Wellbeing Services staff tasked with reviewing the student's evidence of fitness to resume study will produce an updated risk assessment and make a recommendation to the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing, or nominee. The decision to allow a student to return to study will be taken by a senior member of the Student Wellbeing Services team, including the Associate Director (Student Wellbeing and Inclusion) or the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing, or other nominee, based on evidence presented, the updated risk assessment and consultation with relevant parties including the student/applicant's Head of Department.
- 5.4 At the discretion of the Associate Director (Student Wellbeing and Inclusion) or the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing, or other nominee, and in consultation with all parties including the student/applicant, ongoing arrangements to support the student and prevent a reoccurrence of the original difficulties will be agreed. This may take the form of a Supported Study Agreement.

6. Appeals

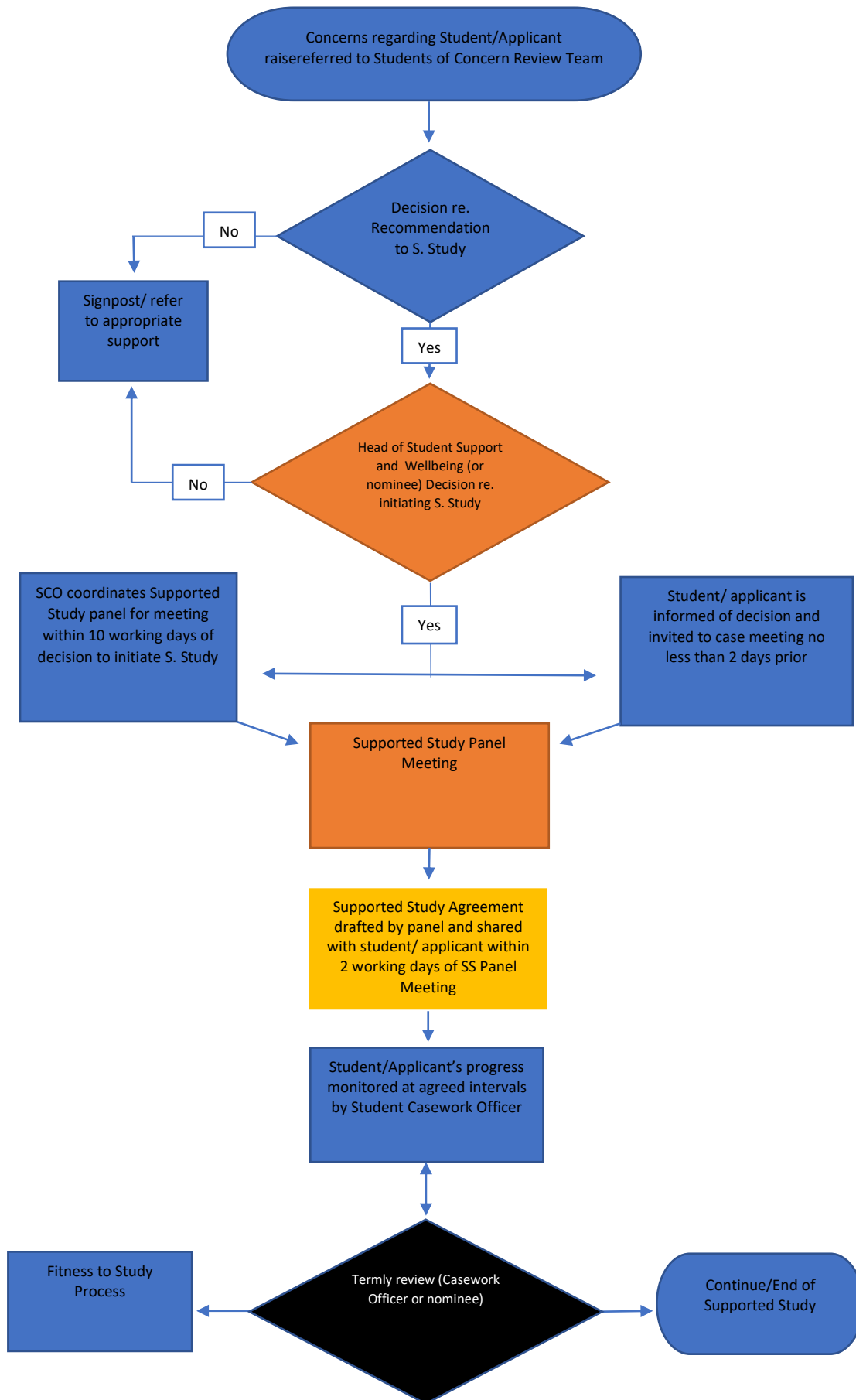
- 6.1 The student/applicant can appeal the outcome of a Supported Study or Fitness to Study Panel or temporary exclusion within 10 working days of the date of the written communication advising them of their outcome. Appeals must be submitted by email to the Student Casework Officer (wellbeing@lancaster.ac.uk).
- 6.2 The Associate Director of Wellbeing and Inclusion (or nominee) will make a prima facie decision on whether there are grounds for the appeal. The grounds for appeal will be:
 - the evidence was not considered properly; or
 - there is evidence of a material procedural irregularity; or

- there is evidence that the judgement did not meet natural justice; or
- there is new material has emerged that was not previously considered. This must be made available in the 10 days following the original Supported Study/Fitness to Study/temporary exclusion outcome decision.

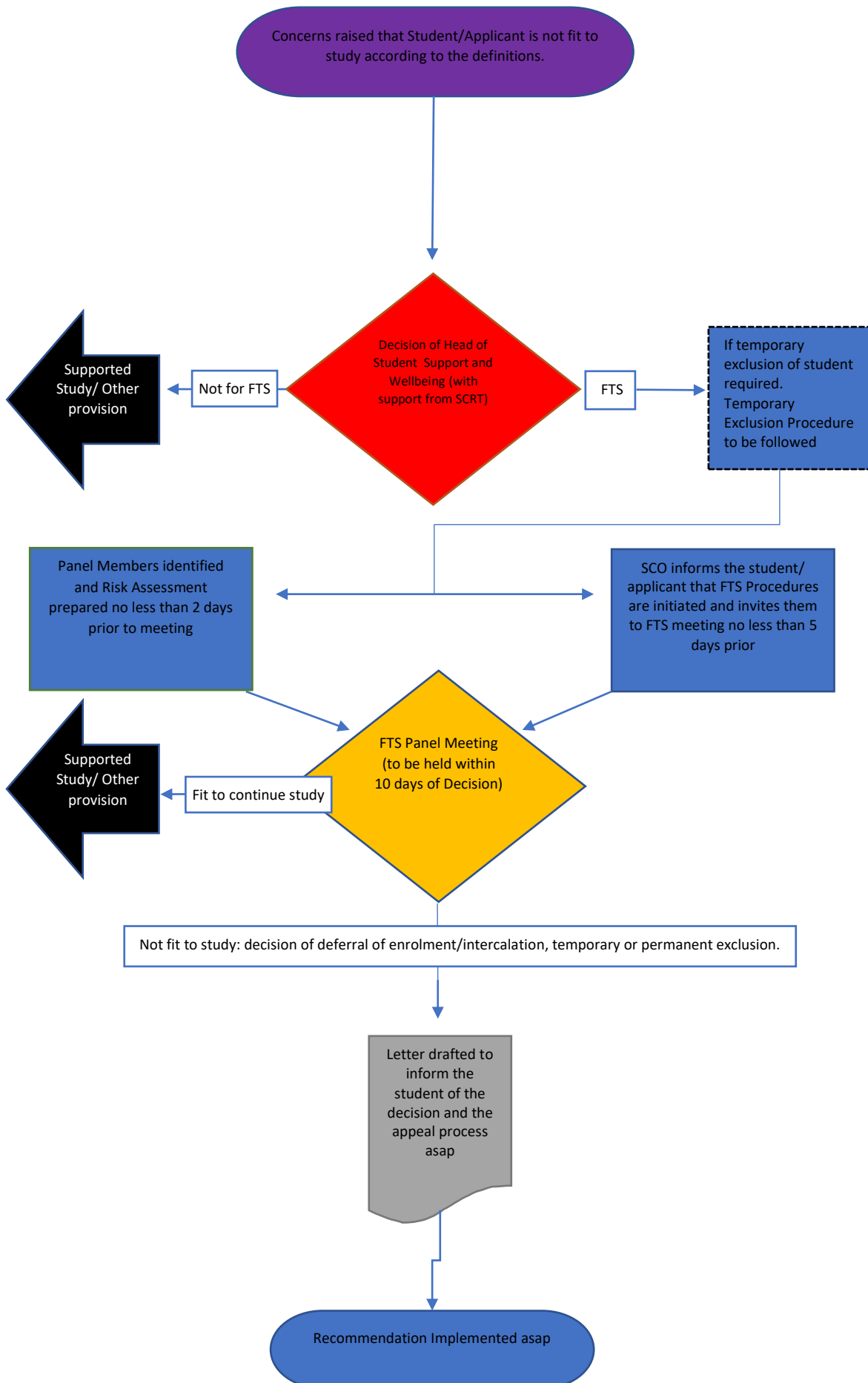
A member of the Student Wellbeing Services team will normally inform the student of the Associate Director's (or nominee's) decision in writing within five working days of the appeal submission.

- 6.3 If valid grounds of appeal have been evidenced, then the Associate Director of Wellbeing and Inclusion (or nominee) will convene a panel to consider the appeal. The appeal panel will be composed of a minimum of three people, all of whom have had no previous engagement with the student case. The appeal panel will only consider written submissions of evidence. The decision of the appeal panel will be final and will consist of one of the following decisions:
- the confirmation of the original decision;
 - referral back to Supported Study/Fitness to Study procedures (if the process has not been followed or if new evidence is made available).
- 6.4 The student/applicant may not attend University during the period of appeal other than necessary meetings by appointment (where remote access is not possible). If the University has identified related problems in college/accommodation it can require the student to leave that accommodation during this period.
- 6.5 The student/applicant can elect to defer enrolment/intercalate or withdraw at any point in the procedures.
- 6.6 Formal notification of the outcome of the appeal will be provided to the appellant in writing within ten working days of the Appeal Panel. Formal notification will include a completion of procedures letter to allow the student access to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- 6.7 Where it is determined that the outcome of an appeal may have significant consequences for others, appropriate information may be shared.
- 6.8 A record of the outcome will be held by Student Wellbeing Services and will be checked in the event of further incidences for no longer than the end of registered student status plus 6 years.

Appendix 1: Supported Study Process



Appendix 2: Fitness to Study Process



Appendix 3

Timeline and checklist for Supported Study procedures

Task	Responsibility	By when?	Complete? (Y/N)
Decision taken to initiate Supported Study procedures	Head of Student Support and Wellbeing		
Supported Study Panel organised	Student Casework Officer	Normally scheduled no later than 10 working days after the decision to initiate SS procedures	
Student informed of decision to initiate Supported Study procedures and invited to attend	Student Casework Officer	No later than 2 working days before the SS Panel meeting	
Risk assessment produced	Student Casework Officer	No later than 1 working day before the SS Panel meeting	
Supported Study Panel meets			
Supported Study Agreement drafted and shared with the student	Student Casework Officer	No later than 2 working days after the SS Panel meeting	
Supported Study Agreements reviewed once per term (minimum)	Student Casework Officer	Once per term	

Timeline and checklist for Fitness to Study procedures

Task	Responsibility	By when?	Complete? (Y/N)
Decision taken to initiate Fitness to Study procedures	Head of Student Support and Wellbeing		
Fitness to Study Panel organised	Student Casework Officer	Normally scheduled no later than 10 full working days after the decision to initiate FTS procedures	
Draft risk assessment produced	Student Casework Officer or nominated individual	No later than 2 full working days before the FTS Panel meeting	
Student informed of decision to initiate Fitness to Study procedures and invited to attend	Student Casework Officer	No later than 5 full working days before the FTS Panel meeting	
Student to submit evidence (if decides to)	Student Casework Officer	At least 2 full working days before the FTS Panel meeting	
Fitness to Study Panel meets			
Fitness to Study Panel decision letter drafted to inform the student of the recommendation and the appeal process.	Chair of FTS Panel/Student Casework Officer/Admin support	Usually within 5 full working days after the FTS Panel meeting	
Decision implemented	Student Casework Officer	As soon as decision confirmed	

Appendix 4: Nominated authorisers and alternatives in relation to the Supported Study and Fitness to Study procedures

Role	Alternative if unavailable (in order of preference)
Head of Student Support and Wellbeing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Casework and Data Manager 2. Head of Counselling and Mental Health Service 3. Associate Director (Wellbeing and Inclusion) 4. Academic Registrar 5. Director of Student, Education and Academic Services 6. Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)
Associate Director (Wellbeing and Inclusion)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Registrar 2. Director of Student, Education and Academic Services 3. Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)
Director of Student, Education and Academic Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Registrar 2. Associate Director (Wellbeing and Inclusion) 3. Director of Employability
Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Head of Governance Services