

## **Support for Study Guidance for Staff**

The purpose of this guidance is to assist staff in supporting students where there are concerns in relation to their fitness to study. The following guidance may be amended as necessary.

### **What is Support for Study?**

The purpose of the Support for Study Policy is to allow the University to consider the support needs of individual students where there may be concerns about their fitness to study.

Fitness to study relates to a student's capacity to participate fully and satisfactorily as a student in relation to their academic studies and student life generally at the University. The Support for Study Policy aims to support students who experience significant difficulties to determine the most appropriate course of action to allow them to complete their studies in the future. A more detailed definition of fitness to study can be found within the Support for Study Policy.

There are three stages to the process:

- Stage 1: Informal resolution (Emerging/low risk concerns)
- Stage 2: Cause for Concern (Persistent and/or serious concerns)
- Stage 3: Formal Support for Study Procedures (High risk concerns where the student demonstrates a risk to themselves or to others)

The majority of students will enter the process at Stage 1 and an informal approach is likely to be sufficient to resolve most cases. However, the procedure allows for immediate escalation to Stages 2 or 3 where there are significant and serious concerns about a student's wellbeing and fitness to study.

Guidance on each of the stages can be found in this document.

### **Immediate Concerns and Emergencies**

In the event of an emergency, where there is an immediate risk to the student and/or to others, a call should be made to 999 for immediate assistance. If the incident is occurring on campus, Security should also be called.

### **When should Support for Study processes begin?**

Concerns about a student's physical or mental wellbeing should be acted on promptly as early intervention and access to the appropriate support can prevent the situation escalating and result in a better outcome for the student concerned.

Concerns relating to the welfare of a student could present in a number of ways that may include:

- Rapid deterioration in academic performance
- Poor attendance and/ or lack of engagement with tutor
- Failure to respond to University communications
- Failure to submit work or comply with other requirements of the programme of study
- An unusually high number of applications for mitigating circumstances
- The sudden on-set of a physical or mental health illness
- Significant change in mood or behaviour (i.e. social withdrawal)
- Poor personal hygiene
- Signs of self-harming
- Drug or alcohol problems

- A pattern of unreasonable demands or communications, which appear irrational, inappropriate or inconsistent

Concerns may also be raised by members of staff or other students. Alternatively, the student may approach a staff member directly to report that they are experiencing difficulties.

When deciding if any Support for Study processes should begin, you may wish to consider:

- Has there been a sustained pattern of one or more of the above behaviours?
- Has there been a single incident that is particularly significant?
- Have other members of staff/students raised concerns?

### **What if a student asks me to keep any information that they share confidential?**

Absolute confidentiality should never be guaranteed. It should be explained that in circumstances where there is a clear risk to the student and/or to others, you may be required to pass on information without consent so that the University can fulfil its duty of care.

Where possible, it is beneficial to gain consent from the student to share information but this is not essential where there is a significant risk to the safety of the student or to others.

### **Can I speak with the student's parents/partner?**

Students over the age of 18 are adults and their parents/partner should not be consulted without explicit consent from the student to do so.

Remember, students may not have nominated their parents/partner as their emergency contact.

Where there are significant concerns about a student's safety or if a student's parents have made contact with you directly, the procedures in the UWTSD Group Student Emergency Contact Policy should be followed.

**Any decision to discuss information about a student with their parents/partner must be considered by senior management.**

### **Can a student bring someone with them to a meeting?**

A student should be permitted to bring someone to any meeting that they are asked to attend to provide them with additional support where needed. It is usually expected that the student will continue to be the main point of contact. However, there may be instances where a student is unable to do this and may wish to nominate someone to act on their behalf. The University recommends that the name and contact details of the nominated contact are confirmed and that explicit consent is provided by the student for you to liaise with a third party on their behalf.

In addition, the Students' Union (UWTSDSU), which is independent from the University, provides support and representation for students and the University advises students to contact UWTSDSU when such matters arise.

Further information about the role of third parties can be found in the University's Third Party Involvement Policy.

## Support for Study Overview

Support for Study Levels			
<b>Stage 1: Emerging Concerns.</b>  <b>Informal/Local resolution</b>	<b>Stage 2: Persistent or Serious Concerns</b>  <b>Cause for Concern process</b>	<b>Stage 3: Student is demonstrating a risk to themselves or others</b>  <b>Formal Support for Study process</b>	<b>EMERGENCIES – IMMEDIATE CONCERNS</b>
Student's behaviour is causing concern but does not present an immediate risk	Student's behaviour/situation appears to be worsening; behaviour is inappropriate &/or they refuse to engage with support (internal or external) or informal process (Stage 1)	Student's behaviour/situation is deemed to be critical. The student may have refused to engage with the Cause for Concern process, has presented as high risk or support needs are beyond what can reasonably be provided by the University.	Student's behaviour presents an immediate & serious risk to themselves &/or to others  <b>Contact 999 to get assistance from emergency services</b>  Contact Security if assistance is required with managing behaviour and risk
↓	↓	↓	
Informal staff discussion with student to discuss concerns	Staff member to liaise with appropriate departments (e.g. Student Services)/team members (e.g. Academic Director) to raise concerns Inform Academic Office ( <a href="mailto:SECases@uwstd.ac.uk">SECases@uwstd.ac.uk</a> ) of cause for concern	Academic Office will begin formal Support for Study processes to investigate the support needs of the student. Precautionary actions may be taken in cases where there is an urgent and serious risk to the student or to others.	Incident should be reported to Student Services and the Academic Office.  Following the end of the emergency, Student Services and the Academic Office will assess what the appropriate next steps are.
↓	↓	↓	
Agree actions with student which may include student	A meeting is arranged between member of staff, representative from Student Support (if	Case Officer is appointed to investigate and produce a report	

engagement with Student Services	required) and the student (+ supporting person if requested by the student)	Investigation is completed within 40 days	
If student engages and interventions are successful, process ends	Agree an action plan and formally monitor engagement over a mutually agreed period of time	If case is determined as non-complex, outcome is determined by the Student Case Review Group	
If student engages and there is some success, extend action plan monitoring period and review again in an agreed period of time	If student engages and interventions are successful, process ends Inform Academic Office of outcome	If case is determined as complex, a Formal Panel is convened to consider the case and any support measures that may be required	
If student does not engage with process, or if interventions are not successful, refer to Stage 2 – Cause for Concern	If student engages and there is some success, extend action plan monitoring period and review again in an agreed period of time Inform Academic Office of outcome	Case is monitored and reviewed by relevant parties and Student Case Review Group	
	If student does not engage with process, or if interventions are not successful, inform Academic Office and refer to Stage 3 – Formal Procedures	If student engages and interventions are successful, process ends	
		If student engages and there is some success, extend action plan monitoring period and review again in an agreed period of time by SCRG	
		If student does not engage with process, or if interventions are not successful, case is reconsidered by SCRG and/or panel  <b>OR</b>	

		<p>Case is referred to Director of Student Services, Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor, Director of Academic Experience, Senior Student Case Officer who may consult relevant academic staff members and other members of staff as appropriate to consider the most appropriate course of action</p>	
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## **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution (Emerging/low risk concerns)**

### **Who should I discuss my initial concerns with?**

If you work within an Institute, you should raise your concerns with your Programme Manager so that they have an overview of the situation and can provide you with support if needed. If you are not based within an Institute, you may wish to discuss your concerns with your Line manager in the first instance.

Where you feel that a concern about a student may be related to their mental or physical health, you may wish to seek some advice from the appropriate Learning Support Manager or Wellbeing Advice Manager in Student Services about sources of support and where the student can be signposted. The Student Services website contains a wealth of step-by-step guidance both in relation to wellbeing and learning support, including up-to-date external advice services available to students.

### **Who can start informal discussions where concerns regarding a student's welfare are raised?**

Informal discussions will usually be conducted by an appropriate member of staff within the Institute (such as the student's programme manager). Even if others will provide particular types of support later (e.g. learning support, counselling, financial advice), students benefit from knowing that their programme team are aware and following their progress.

It is important that any discussions around any such concerns are undertaken within an appropriate environment and that time is allocated for the discussion to take place. A student may wish to discuss sensitive and/or private issues and so the discussion should take place in a quiet and confidential space.

### **When should informal processes begin?**

Informal processes should begin where a student's behaviour or wellbeing raise concerns but there is no immediate crisis. For instance, it may be reported that a student appears to be withdrawn or their attendance rates have dropped. An informal meeting may also be called where there is a deterioration in a student's academic performance or they are not engaging academically.

### **What should be discussed during the meeting?**

The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss any concerns that have been raised. At this stage in the process, it has not been established that the cause of any concerns will have an impact on the student's fitness to study and so the meeting should aim to explore any support needs that the student may have.

The meeting should also aim to establish how the student perceives the concern.

The meeting should be supportive rather than disciplinary in nature. It is also important that the meeting is conducted in a non-judgemental manner, particularly if the student is disclosing sensitive information or discussing difficult topics such as substance misuse.

The meeting is also a useful opportunity to signpost students to sources of information and support, both within and external to the University. It is useful to encourage students to submit a Support Request to Student Services at this stage.

A written record of the meeting and any agreed outcomes should be kept on file.

### **What outcomes are available from the meeting?**

Suitable outcomes may include:

- Monitoring the student's engagement for an agreed period of time, which could be through regular meetings with the Academic Support Tutor
- Recommending that specific academic support arrangements are put in place for the student
- Agreeing that the student will access support through Student Services (counselling, disability, professional academic development, mitigation), or external support services. Specific arrangements must be approved by Student Services.

Consideration will need to be given to the individual circumstances of the student when determining the outcome.

### **When should the progress of the informal process be reviewed?**

The time period for reviewing the agreed outcomes may be dependent on the individual circumstances of the case. However, it is recommended that the time gap between the initial meeting and review meeting is kept relatively short. As a guideline, you may wish to set up a review meeting within 14-28 days of the initial meeting.

### **What happens at the review meeting?**

You should assess the progress that has been made against the agreed actions. If the student is making progress and the concerns have been resolved, further action may not be required. However, you may agree to meet with the student again or 'check in' with the student via other means to ensure that any progress made as a result of the initial intervention continues.

If a student has made some progress against the agreed actions but not all, an additional review meeting should be arranged.

If the student is not engaging with the agreed actions or the concern has not been resolved/appears to be getting worse, the case should be escalated to Stage 2.

## Example invite correspondence

At this stage it may not be clear if there is a Support for Study issue so the purpose is to highlight that some concerns have been raised but not to make any assumptions:

Dear Student,

I write to you regarding some concerns that have been reported to me relating to your wellbeing and your studies. These concerns have arisen following reports from xxx about (e.g. your attendance at lectures and tutorials/non-submission of coursework/EC applications etc).

I would like to meet with you to discuss these concerns. We would like to work with you to consider what support might be useful to you and what support the Institute could provide.

I have been reviewing your attendance records – we are concerned about your continuing lack of attendance and the potential impact on your studies and would like to discuss these with you when we meet. I enclose a copy of the records for your information now.

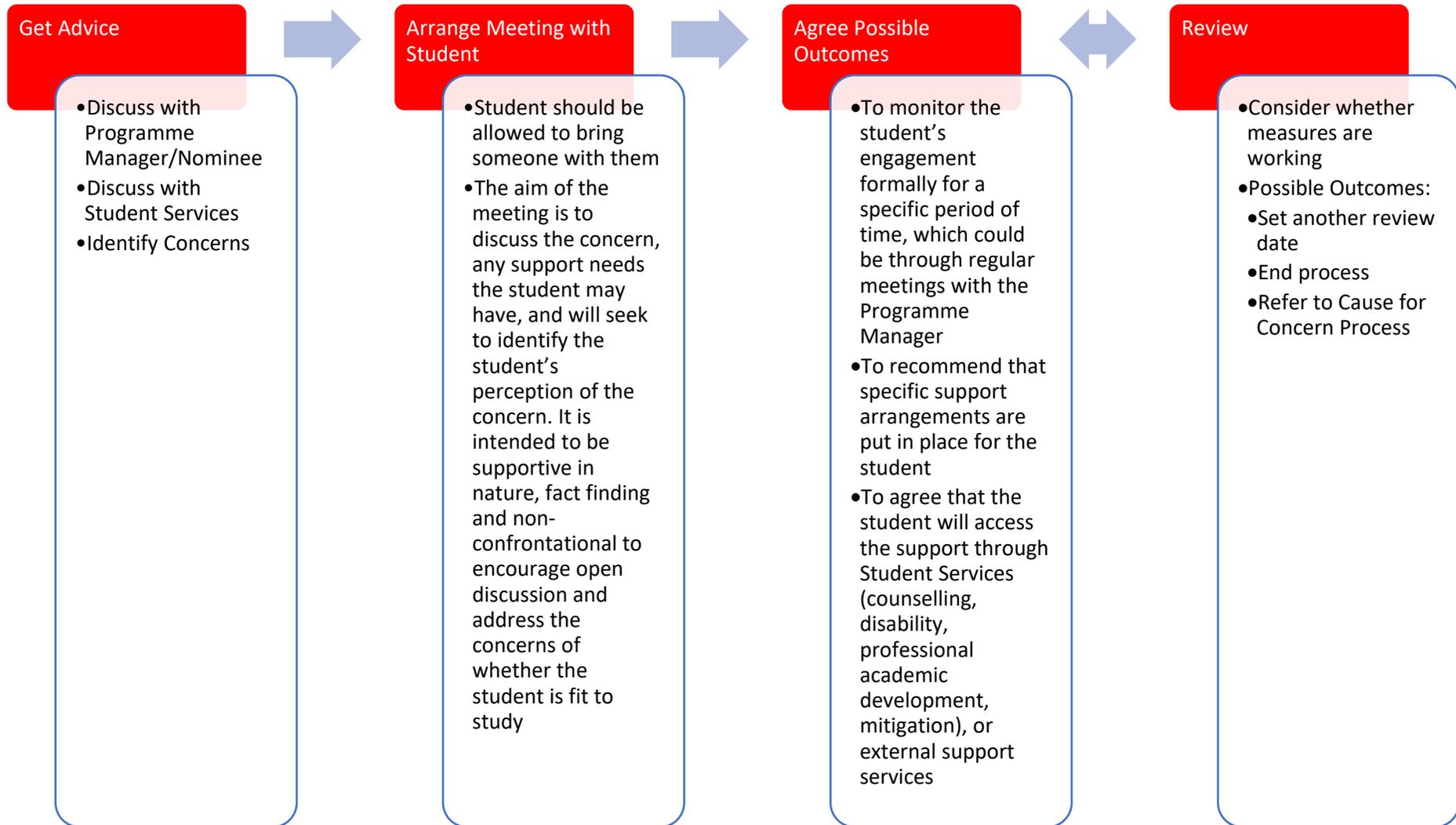
I can meet with you on Friday at 2pm in my office (xxxx). Please let me know as soon as possible if this time suitable for you?

You are welcome to bring someone with you if you wish to have some support during this meeting. If you would like someone to accompany you but do not wish to bring a friend or family member, you may like to contact the Students' Union to ask them for advice.

I would appreciate if you could let me know if you intend to be accompanied at the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

## Stage 1: Informal Resolution Overview



## **Stage 2 - Cause for Concern (Serious or Persistent Concerns)**

### **Who should I raise concerns with?**

You should raise your concerns with the relevant Programme Manager and Academic Director if you work in an Institute, or with your Line Manager if you work within a Professional Services Unit. Where the concern is related to a student's physical or mental health, you should also raise your concerns with the appropriate Learning Support Manager or the relevant Wellbeing Advice Manager in Student Services.

If you have urgent concerns about a student's behaviour, safety, or overall situation, you should submit a [Cause for Concern form](#) to the Wellbeing Service in Student Services. It is also applicable for reporting concerns about how their behaviour may be affecting others. This includes any safeguarding concerns where a student is potentially at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Where concerns are raised about a student that may not be impacting their academic progress, e.g. through the online Cause for Concern form, the Academic Office will liaise with Student Services about the appropriate member of staff to lead on the Cause for Concern process.

### **Who should conduct a Cause for Concern meeting?**

This will normally be conducted by the programme manager and relevant member of staff from Student Services (where appropriate). It may be helpful to establish a 'lead' for the meeting who can co-ordinate any follow-up actions.

### **When should Cause for Concern processes begin?**

If interventions at an informal level have been unsuccessful and/or if a situation being considered in Stage 1 has escalated. Formal Cause for Concern processes can also begin without consideration at Stage 1 if a student's behaviour or appearance is providing a significant concern. This may include:

- Complaints from other students about an individual's behaviour and potential adverse effects on their education or living arrangements;
- Significant concerns about academic progress or engagement;
- A refusal to access support as the student appears to be in denial about the concerns that have been raised;
- Exhibiting behaviour that is a cause for concern – e.g. social withdrawal/non-attendance, poor personal hygiene, signs of deliberate self-harm.

### **What's the difference between the informal meeting and the Cause for Concern meeting?**

The Cause for Concern meeting is the first stage at which formal monitoring of a student's fitness to study begins. **The Academic Office ([secases@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:secases@uwtsd.ac.uk)) should be notified when the Cause for Concern process begins as well as any agreed outcomes.**

### **What should be discussed during the meeting?**

The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss any concerns that have been raised and to explore the support needs of the student. The meeting should be supportive rather than disciplinary in nature with the aim of addressing the concerns around a student's fitness to study.

The student should be provided with a copy of the Support for Study Policy during this meeting. It should be explained that this is deemed necessary to enable the student to successfully complete their studies.

The nature of the concerns and any examples should be provided at this meeting as well as explaining the impact on the students (and other students if relevant).

### **What are the outcomes of a Cause for Concern meeting?**

The Cause for Concern meeting should result in the following:

- A time-limited action plan to address the concerns raised and discussed in the meeting;
- Students should be asked to agree to the action plan;
- An agreed date to meet and review the action plan (usually within a month of the Cause for Concern meeting).

Advice on action plans can be sought from the Academic Office. Template Action plans are available in Appendix A.

### **What happens at the Cause for Concern review meeting?**

The purpose of the review meeting would be to assess whether the measures put in place are working and how well the student has engaged with the identified measures. Possible outcomes of the review meeting include:

- *End Cause for Concern process* – student has made good progress and has engaged with the support identified so no further action is required;
- *Set another review date* – the student has made attempts to engage but further action is necessary to address the concerns raised. Student is provided with additional time to access and engage with the necessary support;
- *Refer to formal Support for Study procedures* – the student has not engaged with the action plan or it has become apparent that the support needs of the student are beyond what can be offered by the relevant services.

Any outcomes agreed at the Cause for Concern review meeting should be reported to the Academic Office ([secases@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:secases@uwtsd.ac.uk)).

**Invite student to a Stage two formal intervention/case review meeting (should be prepared as a formal letter but can also be sent by email)**

**Date**

Dear **name of student, (Student ID)**

On behalf of your **Academic Director**, I am writing to you regarding concerns about your current fitness to study.

It has been noted that: **Outline the main concerns, for example:**

- **You have not attended classes since .....**
- **You have made five applications for mitigating circumstances ...**
- **There have been a number of concerns raised about your health and wellbeing**
- **You have had a meeting with your Academic Support Tutor under stage one of the Support for Study procedure, but concerns remain**

A meeting has been scheduled **for date and time in room location**. You can be accompanied by a friend or Students' Union representative. This meeting will also be attended by **names/titles of any other attendees, i.e. a member of student support (if appropriate)**.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the concerns and consider any action required by the University that can help you in your studies.

In accordance with Cause for Concern portion of the Support for Study procedure; further action may be to agree an action plan or consider whether the case should be escalated to stage three of the Support for Study procedure or if a recommendation should be made to the next appropriate examination board that you should be withdrawn from your studies.

I will write to you following the meeting to confirm any further action to be taken.

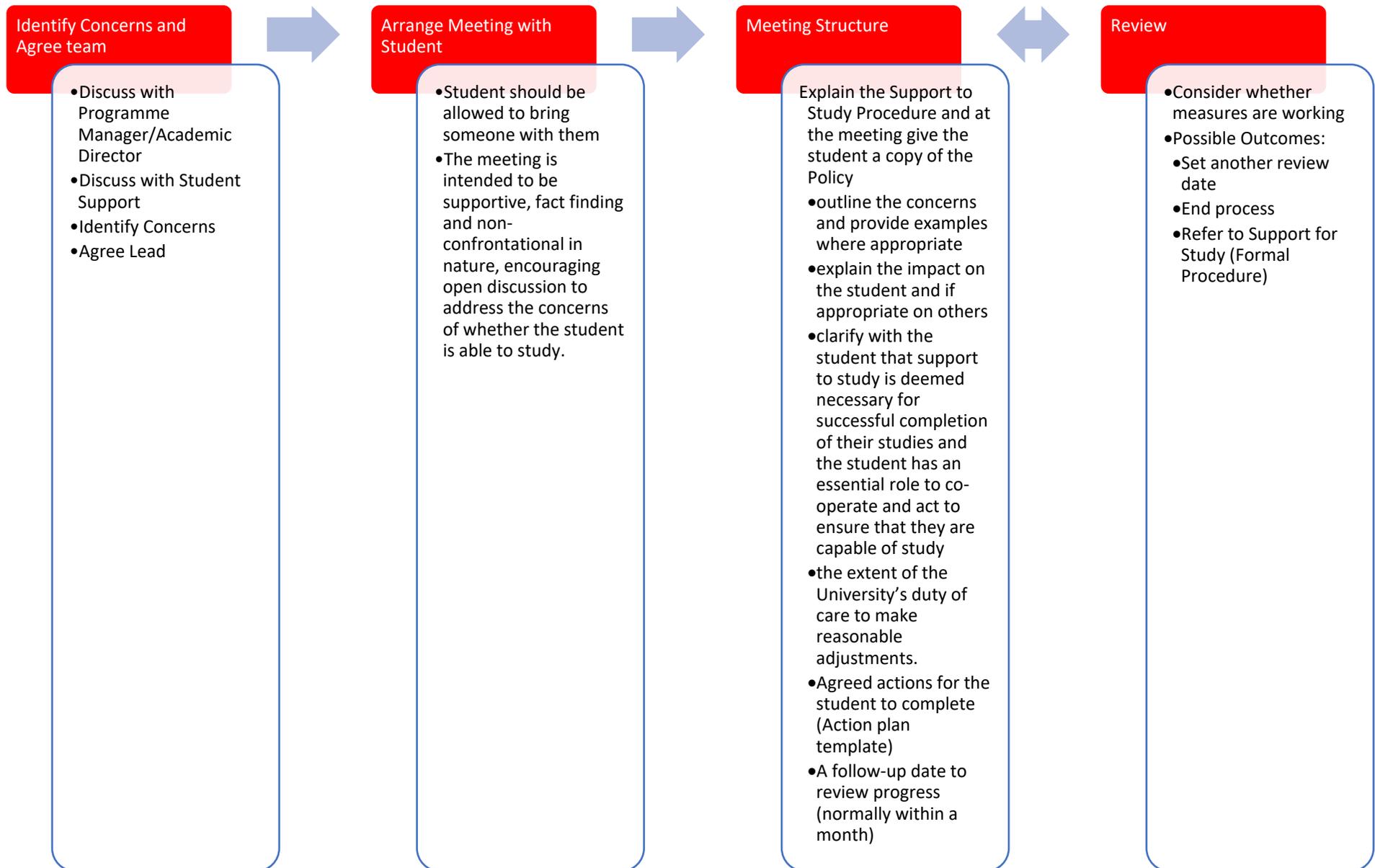
I would like to highlight the important of this meeting and if there is a good reason why you are unable to attend at this time, you should contact me immediately.

Please be aware that if you do not attend, the meeting will proceed in your absence.

You may wish to review the [Support for Study policy](#) before the meeting.

Yours sincerely

## Stage 2: Cause for Concern Overview



### **Stage 3: Formal Support for Study Procedures**

#### **When do students get referred to Stage 3 of the procedures?**

Students are referred to the formal Support for Study processes where there are unresolved concerns about a student's physical and/or mental wellbeing because:

- they have not engaged with earlier stages of the Support for Study process;
- their physical and/or mental wellbeing has deteriorated/continued to deteriorate even with engagement at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 of the Support for Study Procedure;
- their support requirements are beyond what can reasonably be provided by the University.

A student may also be referred directly to Stage 3 without being considered at an earlier stage in the process where they are assessed as being very high risk and demonstrate an ongoing risk to themselves and/or others. Direct referral to Stage 3 often arises from a Cause for Concern form submission. In such cases, the instigation of Support for Study procedures is discussed by Student Services and the Academic Office, and the programme team consulted where required.

If you are unsure whether a student should be referred straight to formal procedures, please contact the Academic Office at [secases@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:secases@uwtsd.ac.uk) for further guidance.

## **Internal Protocols for Sharing Information in Relation to Formal Support for Study Processes**

### General Principle:

Information about the case should be disclosed to as few people as possible and will be provided on a need-to-know basis to enable staff to support the student concerned.

### Student Services:

Staff within Student Services are often engaged with supporting students that have been referred through formal Support for Study procedures. Information will be shared with the Director of Student Services through the Student Case Review Group in relation to students that are being referred through formal Support for Study procedures.

Where it is known that a student is accessing support through Student Services, the Academic Office will also inform the relevant Learning Support Manager and/or Wellbeing Advice Manager of the intention to commence Support for Study procedures prior to notifying the student. This will enable those involved with supporting the student to explain what is involved and assist the student with raising any questions in relation to the process.

The Director of Student Services and the relevant Learning Support Manager and/or Wellbeing Advice Manager will be informed of the outcomes of the Support for Study procedures in order to provide support once the process has been completed.

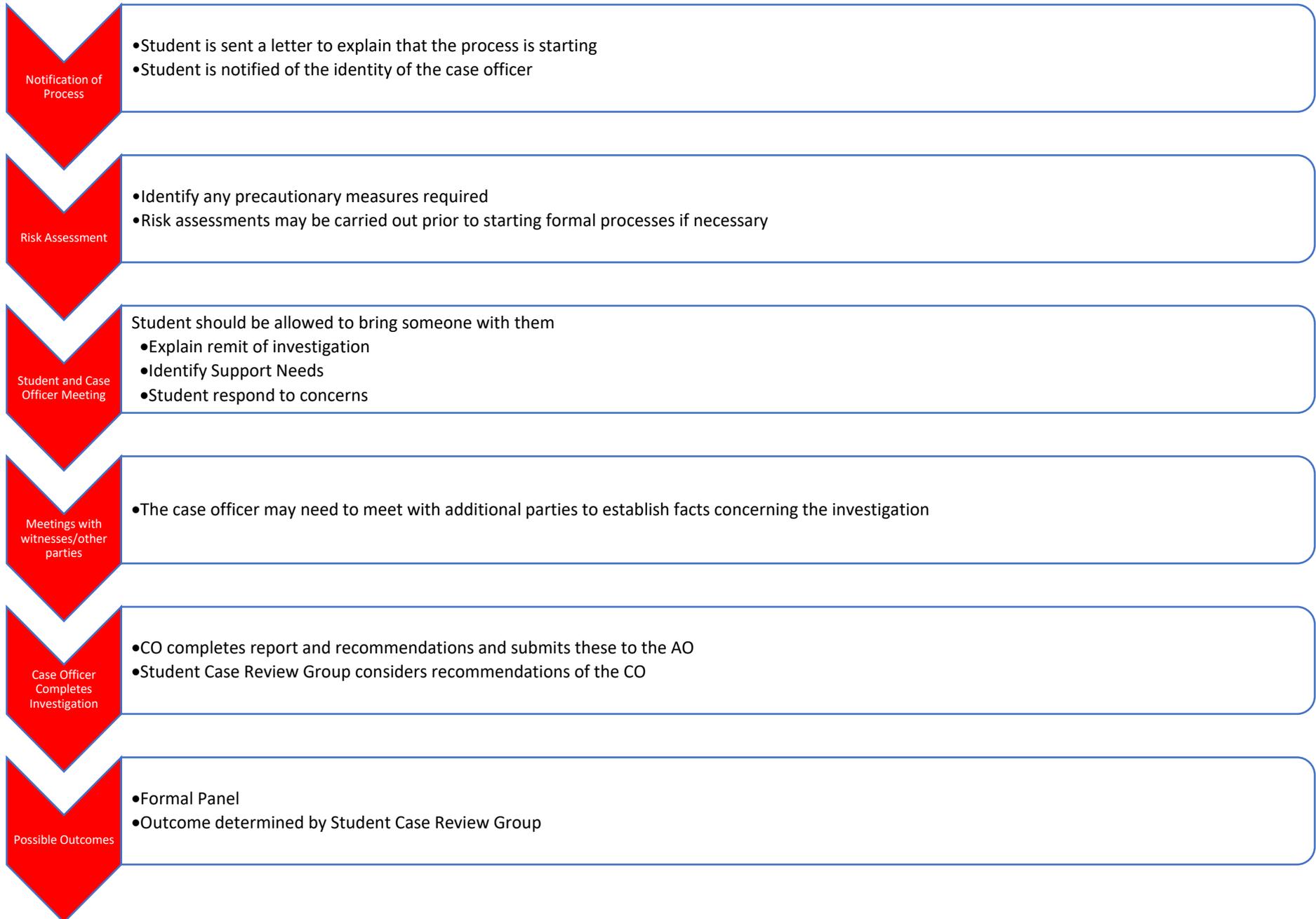
Panel discussions/minutes and Case Officer investigation reports will not normally be shared.

### Specific Cases:

Where any precautionary measures or outcomes that involve the support of internal departments such as academic staff within the Institute or staff within professional services departments, they will be provided with relevant details:

- Registry:  
Will be provided with information in relation to suspensions, withdrawal, information to be stored against student record.
- Finance:  
Will be provided with information in relation to changes to fees, reimbursements, etc.
- Institutes:  
Programme Manager will be provided with confirmation of any specific academic-related outcomes.
- IT&S:  
Will be provided with information in relation to any requirements regarding access to IT facilities
- Accommodation  
Will be provided with information relevant to any accommodation requirements or recommendations

## Formal Support for Study Procedure Overview



## **Return to Study**

Where risk levels are particularly high, students may be required to suspend studies as an outcome of the Support for Study procedures. During this time, students will be asked to maintain contact with a nominated member of staff so that their progress can be reviewed and discussions can take place with regards to returning to study.

Where a student has been suspended from study as a result of Support for Study procedures, they must contact the Academic Office to indicate their intent to return to study. If a student contacts you directly to say that they would like to return, please encourage them to email [secases@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:secases@uwtsd.ac.uk) as there may be specific conditions that need to be met in order for their return to be agreed.

Where a student is returning to study, a meeting should be held during the first week to discuss their transition back into University and to develop an action plan to ensure that this is supported.

The return to study meeting should be held between a relevant member of staff from the Institute (normally programme manager) and involve the relevant Learning Support Manager from Student Services.

A follow up meeting should be held to review the student's progress against the agreed action plan. Where there are concerns that a student is not making sufficient progress upon their return to study, these should be raised with the Academic Office.

## Appendix A

### Support for Study Action Plan

#### Student Details

<b>Student Name</b>	
<b>Student ID Number</b>	
<b>Programme of Study</b>	
<b>Level of Study</b>	

#### Action Plan Details

<b>Action Required</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>When</b>

#### Meeting Details

<b>Meeting Date</b>	Click or tap to enter a date.
<b>Review Date</b>	Click or tap to enter a date.

#### Confirmation

	<b>Agreed by</b>	<b>Signature (email confirmation is acceptable)</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Member of Staff</b>			
<b>Student</b>			

