

## Fitness To Study Policy

| DOCUMENT CONTROL  |                     |                        |                 |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| SLT owner:  | Catherine Armstrong | Together With:         | Steve McAlinden |
| Date created/updated:   | 31/10/16            | Review Date:           | July 2017       |
| Approval Need by SLT:   | Yes / No            | Date Approved:         | 10-1-17         |
| Approval Need by Governors:   | No                  | Date Approved:         |                 |
| Approval Need by Unions:  | No                  | Date Approved:         |                 |
| Impact Assessment Date*:  | 9-2-16              | Job Title of Assessor: | GVP Qual & Cur  |
| Audience:   | Staff: Yes          | Students: Yes          | Public: Yes     |
| <i>If approval is not required by SLT/Governors/Unions please give reason, ie name changes only.</i>  |                     |                        |                 |
| <i>* If the contents of this policy have been copied from an existing policy with <b>no changes</b> please insert the date of the original Impact Assessment and Assessor in the table above.</i> |                     |                        |                 |

### 1. Scope and Purpose

The overarching approach of this policy is the recognition that each learner is an individual and will be treated with respect. Occasionally learners face a personal, challenging situation and we will endeavour to take a fair and consistent approach in circumstances where learners are unable to meet course requirements in terms of attendance; participation in class or completion of work; or the expectations of the College's code of conduct due to:

- a) Aspects of the learner's personal life such as caring responsibilities
- b) Any Additional Learning Needs such as a Disability, Medical Condition or Impairment
- c) A mental health difficulty or illness

For those learners who experience any of the above, it will be more appropriate to address concerns related to their attendance and behaviour through an approach based on a consideration of their fitness to study rather than adopting disciplinary procedures.

The Colleges Group acknowledges that as a result of implementing this policy it will receive personal data of a confidential and sensitive nature and shall ensure that all such data is handled, processed and stored accordingly.

Normally, sensitive personal data and confidential information will only be disclosed to third parties with the express, informed consent of the learner for the purposes of implementing this policy. However, there may be occasions where the College is obliged to disclose, notwithstanding that the learner has refused consent. These include:

- a) Where the learner's behaviour threatens their safety or the safety of others
- b) Where the member of staff or the Colleges Group would be liable to civil or criminal penalty for failing to disclose.

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The Group's commitment to equal opportunities is demonstrated through its determination that every learner receives a high quality learning experience which will bring them success. The Fitness to Study Policy will be implemented in a manner which maintains each individual's attendance at college if at all possible, and will follow other college policies in section 6.

### 2. Indicators of Concern

- a) Serious concerns about the learner emerge from a third party (friend, colleague, placement provider, member of the public, employer, multi-agency partner, parent) which indicates there is a need to address Fitness to Study
- b) A learner has told a member of the College's staff that they have a problem and/or provided information which indicates that there is a need to address their Fitness to Study.
- c) The learner's disposition is such that it indicates that there may be a need to address an underlying mental health issue. For example if a learner has demonstrated mood swings or unusual behaviour, shown signs of depression, become withdrawn, aggressive, stressed, irritable or is becoming intimidating towards others.
- d) Behaviour, otherwise dealt with as a disciplinary matter, which is considered may be as a result of underlying physical or mental health problem.

**In all instances, the Student Support Manager should be contacted, through Pro Monitor (for learners based at Shrewsbury College) or the Curriculum Support Team Leader (for learners based at Shrewsbury Sixth Form College).**

### There are four stages to the Procedures

Stage 1 – Pre Entry

Stage 2 – Emerging Concerns

Stage 3 – Continuing or Strong Initial Concerns

Stage 4 – Immediate Serious and/or No Progress Concerns

It is not necessary to progress through each stage of the process in every case. Identification of the appropriate stage of the procedure to use will be determined following risk assessment by the Student Support Manager/ Curriculum Support Team Leader leading the procedure. Where a serious risk is identified, the procedure may be entered at Stage 3 or 4 depending on the level of risk. Should a learner be unwilling to participate in the procedures, the process will continue in their absence with all options remaining available.

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### **3. Procedures**

#### **Stage 1 Pre – Entry**

- It is the responsibility of prospective learners to disclose any additional needs related to their mental or physical health at application point. This information does not normally adversely affect any offer of a place.
- We will ask for specific information from the students doctor (Appendix 1) regarding the students Disability/ Medical Condition (anorexia nervosa, psychosis etc.) rather than accept any generalised information on the Disability/Medical Condition, if we feel it is relevant. This information will be used primarily to establish the best programme of study and to put any additional support requirements in place where this is reasonable.
- We will take into account our duty of care towards all student and staff, Health and Safety considerations and what can be reasonably be expected of teaching staff
- Wherever possible, we aim to include health professionals and other external experts in discussions and in all cases medical evidence will be required to inform the support plan agreed
- Where appropriate, we will draw up a risk assessment before an award of place can be made, an agreement from the individual student will be required to ensure they follow the Risk Assessment.
- Consent will be sought to share information we hold with all relevant staff members

#### **Stage 2 - Emerging Concerns**

This applies where emerging concerns about a learner's health, safety or wellbeing are raised.

- A panel meeting will be arranged involving relevant staff. It is at the College's discretion to decide who the panel members are.
- As a result of the meeting the following action will be taken:
- The panel will convene a meeting with the learner. In all cases involving learners aged under 18, a parent or guardian should be involved. If the learner is over 18 years of age they are entitled to support but not from any legal representative
- An action plan with SMART monitoring targets to address the issues discussed. This may involve referral to external agencies.
- All outcomes are to be recorded and stored securely, through the use of ProMonitor.

#### **Stage 3 – Continuing or Strong Initial Concerns**

- Applies when continuing or serious concerns about a learner's health, safety or well-being.
- A panel meeting will be arranged involving relevant staff. It is at the College's discretion to decide who the panel members are.

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- Discussions will involve establishing whether further Reasonable Adjustments or support can be put in place to enable the learner to continue their studies.
- As a result of the meeting the following action will be taken.
- The panel will convene a meeting with the learner. In all cases involving learners aged under 18, a parent or guardian should be involved. If the learner is over 18 years of age they are entitled to support but not from any legal representative.
- The outcome of this meeting may be to –
  - a) Recommend withdrawal from the course with a view to re-enrolling at a future date. This may or may not be the same course dependant on the nature of the concerns.
  - b) Transfer to an alternative course if the time period set by the college could accommodate this.
  - c) Allow the student to continue on their existing programme of study with additional support and monitoring

If a learner is asked to withdraw from a course of study they will be asked to do this voluntarily. If the learner refuses to enter into this agreement voluntarily, the case will be referred to the Curriculum Support Director for a decision on whether the Behaviour/ Disciplinary Policy and procedures are implemented or whether exclusion is the recommendation.

### **Stage 4 – Immediate and Serious and/or No Progress Concerns**

Applies when there are immediate and serious issues or where no progress from previous concerns has been made and where a learner's actions or behaviours are putting the health, safety, well-being or academic progress of themselves or other individuals at significant risk and /or are likely to adversely affect the reputation of the College.

- If the case is the result of an incident which falls into one of the above categories, first responders should ensure they minimise any immediate danger to the individual or witnesses whilst not exposing themselves unnecessarily to personal danger.
- A Senior Manager should be informed immediately.
- The Student Support Manager/ Curriculum Support Team Leader should be contacted immediately through ProMonitor.
- The learner should be suspended until a case conference can be convened.
- If a learner has reached this Stage as a result of not having met previous recommendation:
- The learner should be suspended until a case conference can be convened.
- A case conference will be held with relevant staff to discuss the case in question. This should take place before the learner is invited to a further panel meeting. In all cases involving learners aged under 18, a parent or guardian should be involved. If the learner is over 18 years of age they are entitled to support but not from any legal representative.
- Any medical reports relating to the learner should be presented to the panel to facilitate the construction of a risk assessment in the panel pre-meeting.

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- If the panel has convened as a result of an immediate and serious incident the risk assessment will inform whether a supportive action plan can be put in place in order for the learner to remain at college. If this is the case, the action plan should be revisited after 4 weeks to ensure progress is being made; the panel should re-convene to discuss this.
- If the panel has met as a result of no progress concerns or increasing concerns, a decision should be made about whether the learner remains on their course.
- Recommendation for Exclusion from College. This action is for the consideration of at least 2 members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Completion of course as a distance learning package if time to completion is a consideration.
- No refunds will be given if a student is asked or leaves a course as part of the college's fees policy.

### **3. Appeals**

The learner has a right of appeal where the decision has been made to exclude. All appeals should be made in writing to the Principal within 5 College days of the decision.

The Principal's decision will be final.

Exclusion will preclude a learner applying for another course at the college until the following academic year or a period of 6 months depending on when the exclusion has occurred. Should the learner wish to apply for further study at a future date, the college will require evidence from an external professional that they are fit to return to study with reasonable adjustments if required and will convene a meeting with the learner and external agency prior to attending an advice and guidance interview.

### **4. Related Documents**

Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Behaviour/ Disciplinary Policy

Quality Handbook

Fees Policy

ALS Policy

HE ALS Policy

Prevent Strategy

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**Appendix 1****FITNESS TO STUDY MEDICAL ASSESSMENT**Information for GP or other appropriate professional:

Shrewsbury Colleges Group's Student Health and Wellbeing Policy aims to ensure all students can study and perform to the best of their ability, in a safe and comfortable environment.

On occasions, it is necessary to review an individual's fitness to study due to mental or other health related reasons. A medical or professional assessment is then required to help the Colleges Group assess when / whether a student is a fit to continue with their studies, able to cope with the demands of the course (including placement) and university / college life and whether any adjustments need to be made. The student's consent in Section 1 allows you to provide this information and for us to contact you for further information if required.

Using the information provided by the student (regarding their reasons for postponement), the student's course management team and / or other relevant University / or college staff in section 2 below, please comment on each of the items listed in Section 3. The information you provide will be treated in confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Many thanks for your support with this assessment process.

Once completed, please return this form to the Student Support Manager.

Samantha Jones, Student Support Manager  
Shrewsbury Colleges Group  
London Road  
Shrewsbury, SY2 6PR  
01743 342319  
[samanthajo@shrewsbury.ac.uk](mailto:samanthajo@shrewsbury.ac.uk)

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|   |  |             |  |
|---|--|-------------|--|
| <b>SECTION 1 (To be completed by the student):</b>  |  |             |  |
| <b>Student name</b>   |  |             |  |
| <b>Date of birth</b>  |  |             |  |
| <b>Student registration number</b>  |  |             |  |
| <b>Year of study</b>  |  |             |  |
| <b>Course</b>   |  |             |  |
| <b>Student consent</b>  |  |             |  |
| <p>I agree to my GP/other appropriate professional providing Shrewsbury Colleges Group with a medical assessment of my fitness to commence/resume my studies, both using this form and through follow-up communication, if required.</p>  |  |             |  |
| <b>Student signature</b>  |  | <b>Date</b> |  |
| <b>SECTION 2 (To be completed by Registry Office/Student Services/Course Team):</b>   |  |             |  |
| <p>The student's fitness to study or their return to study (following postponement), is being considered for the following reasons. The University seeks an update of his/her current situation and his/her ability to cope with the demands of academic study, undertaking placements and student life more broadly, including independent living.</p> |  |             |  |
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| <b>SECTION 3 (to be completed by appropriate medical professional / primary care provider):</b>        |
| <b>Medical assessment of (name of student):</b>  |
| <b>Date of commencement of care for current health condition:</b>                                      |
| <b>Date of discharge (unless ongoing):</b>   |
| <b>Frequency / Regularity of Appointments:</b>   |
| <b>1. The nature and extent of any medical / health condition from which the student is suffering:</b> |
|  |

| <b>2. The extent to which the student's condition may affect his/her fitness to study and manage the demands of student life in relation to each of the following:</b> |   |  |                |               |              |
|--|---|--|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Psychological Factors  | Potential effects on performance for study, work or student life, in relation to:     | Estimate of frequency of student support requirements or adjustment needed (please circle) |                |               |              |
| <b><i>Cognition</i></b>  | Intelligence, memory, academic skills, and the ability to use and apply these skills. | <b>No support</b>  | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
| Comments on impact of condition and associated support needs:  |   |  |                |               |              |
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| <b>Pace</b>   | The ability to perform tasks at a reasonable speed. | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
|---|---|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Comments on impact of condition and associated support needs: |   |                   |                |               |              |

| <b>Persistence</b>  | The ability to stay with a task until it is complete. | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
|---|---|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Comments on impact of condition and associated support needs: |   |                   |                |               |              |

| <b>Reliability</b>  | Attending lectures or attending work placement every day in spite of personal or emotional problems. | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
|---|--|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Comments on impact of condition and associated support needs: |  |                   |                |               |              |

| <b>Stress tolerance</b>                                       | The ability to withstand studying and exam pressures, to meet deadlines and have work scrutinised in a work or study environment. | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
|---|---|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Comments on impact of condition and associated support needs: |   |                   |                |               |              |

| <b>Conscientiousness and motivation</b>                       | The desire and determination to achieve and persisting until it is accomplished. | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
|---|--|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Comments on impact of condition and associated support needs: |  |                   |                |               |              |

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|--|--|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b><i>Interpersonal functioning</i></b>                              | The ability to accept supervision and to get along with fellow students, staff or colleagues.  | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
| Comments on impact of condition and associated support needs:        |  |                   |                |               |              |
| <b><i>Honesty, trustworthiness</i></b>                               | The ability to be truthful, direct, and straightforward, to refrain from such things as lying and manipulation.  | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
| Comments on impact of condition and associated support needs:        |  |                   |                |               |              |
| <b><i>Academic-specific requirements</i></b>                         | These typically include presentation skills, conflict resolution skills, “people skills” but may also require course-specific aspects, as listed in section 2. | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
| Comments on impact of condition and associated support needs:        |  |                   |                |               |              |
| <b><i>Physical health factor(s)</i></b>                              |  | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
| Comments on impact of condition(s) and associated support needs:     |  |                   |                |               |              |
| <b><i>Difficulties which affect thoughts, mood or behaviours</i></b> |  | <b>No support</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
| Comments on impact of condition(s) and associated support needs:     |  |                   |                |               |              |

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**3. The impact the student's condition may have on, or risk it may pose to, self or others:**

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**Details of Appropriate Professional**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Name</b>      |  |
| <b>Position</b>  |  |
| <b>Employer</b>  |  |
| <b>Address</b>   |  |
| <b>Telephone</b> |  |
| <b>Email</b>     |  |
| <b>Signature</b> |  |
| <b>Date</b>      |  |