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REMEMBER: If there is an immediate concern for the safety of any person, this should be reported to the Emergency Services on 999 or 112. NUI Galway Security Services should also be informed via an Emergency Tel. Contact Number 091 – 493333.

# Support for Students in Crisis

## 1. Introduction

1.1 NUI Galway, as stated in our strategic plan Vision 2020, is committed to ensuring that our students develop their full intellectual potential. This is a two-way process, where students and lecturers engage fully with their programmes of teaching and learning. Our aim is to empower students to shape their own futures, by ensuring that they are academically well developed and prepared for life, work and citizenship. Recognising the challenges of the academic journey, we are committed to the holistic development of our diverse student community. Central to our students' well-being and identity is a sense of belonging. That sense is strengthened when students feel securely anchored within their learning communities, when they can define in their own words the skills and capacities that they are developing through their programmes, and when they have access to support in such areas as accommodation, finance, welfare, sport and culture. Therefore, students should be able to study and perform to the best of their ability in a safe and comfortable environment. For the vast majority of students, progression and completion of their studies is achieved without any additional support other than those elucidated above. However, for some students a coordinated approach is needed in order to respond to a student in distress. Likewise, students need to conform to certain standards of behaviour in order to maintain and enhance the University community. When a situation arises where the student is disrupting his/her own studies or those of others or placing unreasonable demands on staff or other students a policy is needed to address this. The cause of these actions may be related to a crisis in the student's life and therefore it would not be appropriate to deal with under the disciplinary Code of Conduct. This policy is intended to respond to students who require support owing to a crisis.

1.2 The Support for Student in Crisis Policy should be seen as a positive and supportive process that recognises the individual needs of a student. The intention is to work with individual students that are displaying concerning behavioural traits.

1.3 The main purpose of this document is to set out the policy and procedures, which the University follows when concerns are raised about a student's behaviour. As a rule this policy is only intended for use in cases in which the behaviour, disruption or risk presented by the student is perceived to be of a serious or potentially serious nature. Where possible the other University support services available to students, as outlined in Section 5 below, should be used as the first port of call prior to taking any formal action.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

2.1 The purpose of this document is to fulfil a number of objectives:

1. For potential applicants to our University:

(i) help clarify and shape their expectations of study at NUI Galway

2. For staff:

(i) provide clear guidelines and fair and proportionate procedures to follow when significant concerns arise regarding registered students' behaviour that need to be addressed;

(ii) define a clear process to follow to ensure the safe and suitable return to University for students after a break in study as a result of a crisis.

3. For all students:

(i) help understand and appreciate the Support for Students in Crisis Policy and its necessity

(ii) to provide supportive formal procedures

- (iii) to enable students to withdraw/take leave of absence voluntarily as a result of a crisis
- (iv) to determine if and how a student is required to take leave of absence as a result of a crisis
- (v) to clarify the process for a return to study.

2.2 Having a written procedure enables students to have a document to which they can refer, providing them with a clear understanding of their full responsibilities and expectations related to their commitment to study and life within the University community.

2.3 If and when a problem arises, steps taken are seen to be limited to those necessary to protect the best interests of the student, ensuring a consistent, sensitive and non-discriminatory approach to providing appropriate students support.

2.4 Tutorial, academic or support staff can initiate the use of the procedure if the student behaviour causes sufficient concern. Shared concerns in other sections of the University community can be formally collated by the use of this process.

2.5 This policy is not designed to be used to address academic performance issues (which should be dealt with under the normal assessment procedures) or with issues relating to attendance.

2.6 The level of risk posed by a student will be initially measured by the risk assessment process using the 'risk assessment grid' (Appendix 1). This will be used throughout the procedure to provide a consistent means of assessing the risk to the student, other individuals and the institution. This process will be led by the Dean of Students (or nominee) in close collaboration with academic staff, who will play a key role in identifying the specific evidence to underpin any concerns.

2.7 The Support for Students in Crisis policy and procedures detailed below is comprised of three stages. Depending upon the perceived severity of the situation and the seriousness of any perceived risks, action may be initiated at any of the three stages.

2.8 If concerns are raised whilst a student is on placement, the University will follow the 'Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedure' as primary guidance, supported by the Support for Students in Crisis Policy.

2.9 The development, implementation and ongoing review of this policy is the responsibility of the Dean of Students, following approval of Academic Council.

## **Relationship with other University Policies and Procedures**

3.1 Subject to clause 3.2, the Support for Students in Crisis Policy shall not be invoked for circumstances already being considered under including but not limited to the following University policies and procedures:

- i) Academic Marks and Standards
- ii) Fitness to Practise
- iii) Code of Conduct, with the exception where the Discipline committee considers that a serious fitness to study issue arises.
- iv) Harassment.
- v) Bullying

3.2 The Dean of Students or the President shall have the discretion to determine which policy shall be invoked.

## **Circumstances which may trigger the use of the Support for Students in Crisis Policy**

4.1 There is a tradition of support for students, from academic and support staff and Student Services in this University. Many students facing challenging situations will overcome these with these available supports. It is envisaged that this supportive environment will be continued, and the use of this policy is intended only for circumstances where it is determined that issues cannot be resolved using existing supports.

4.2 The issue of a student's behaviour may be brought into question as a result of a wide range of circumstances. These include (but are not restricted to) the following:

- The student has told a member of the University that they have a problem and/or provide information which indicates they may be experiencing a crisis and need support. While respecting confidentiality and thus not providing any detail on the substance of the conversation, if there is a concern, the matter may be raised and considered under this policy.
- The student's behaviour is such that it indicates that there may be a need to address an underlying crisis. A crisis may result from, including but not limited to; a medical event, extenuating financial circumstances, substance abuse, physical or sexual abuse, homelessness.
- Behaviour, which would otherwise be dealt with as a disciplinary matter, which it is considered may be the result of a crisis.
- The student's behaviour is severely disrupting their own studies or the studies of others, or results in unreasonable demands being placed on staff or other students.
- Serious concerns about the student are communicated by a third party (e.g., house-mate, friend, colleague, placement provider, member of the public, medical professional) which indicate that there is a need to address their behaviour.

4.3 The areas of concern will include:

- The safety of the student, whether as a result of intentional or unintentional self-harm
- Whether the student is at risk from others or poses a risk to others
- The needs of the student including:
  - their ability to look after themselves
  - any disabling or distressing problems with thinking, feeling or behaviour
  - significant difficulties with activities or in relationships with other people.

The level of risk should be assessed using the risk assessment grid (Appendix 1).

**4.4 In all cases, the student's Programme Director/Head of School/Dean of College should be notified so that the Programme/School/College is aware of the situation and can provide any necessary support.**  
**Initial Support and Guidance for Students – Preliminary Action**

5.1 Students struggling with issues affecting their general fitness to study are primarily encouraged to consult the relevant support services to discuss issues and to seek solutions. Below is list of potential contacts:

- University Health Centre (and by referral to the Mental Health Support Worker)
- Student Advisor
- Student Counselling Service
- Disability Support Service
- Access Centre
- International Welfare Advisor
- Chaplaincy
- Appropriate external services

Further information on these services and other services available can be found by visiting the Student Services web- pages (<http://www.nuigalway.ie/student-services/>).

5.2 Students are also expected to speak to their Programme Director, Head of School or another appropriate member of staff in their academic discipline about the difficulty and any related problems that they may be experiencing.

5.3 Staff with further or unresolved concerns about a student's behaviour should subsequently address them by invoking the use of this policy. Tutorial, Academic, Accommodation or Student Support and Wellbeing staff can initiate the use of the following procedures if concern for the student is sufficient. Depending upon the perceived severity of the situation and seriousness of any perceived risks (Appendix 1), action may be initiated at any of the three stages.

### **Support for Students in Crisis Procedure Stage 1 – Informal Action**

6.1 Should preliminary action be unsuccessful, the member of staff who has raised the concern should consult with a colleague to discuss the next steps or seek advice from the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students (or nominee) or Head of Academic Unit will take the lead in the implementation of Stage One of the policy. The lead staff member (Dean of Students or nominee or Head of Academic Unit) will meet with the student to explain to them, in a supportive and understanding manner, that concerns about their behaviour have emerged which have been registered by invoking the use of this policy.

The lead staff member raising the concern should ordinarily be a member of staff within the academic discipline with primary responsibility and/or knowledge of the student concerned (e.g., Programme Director or Head of Discipline or Head of School). However, if concerns arise within University student residences, then the Accommodation & Welfare Office should take the lead, in consultation with academic staff in the student's discipline. It may be prudent to review the other NUI Galway policies which may apply (for example, Student Code of Conduct or Fitness to Practise) before progressing the matter under this policy.

6.2 The student should be made aware of the nature of the behaviour that has caused the concerns to be raised (it is possible that s/he will not have realised the impact of their actions). If appropriate, reference should be made to the level of perceived risk presented by the student as measured by the risk assessment process (Appendix 1). The lead staff member will attempt to resolve the matter by informal discussions with the student. The student should be given the opportunity to explain their own views on the matter, and be encouraged to think about using one or more of the support services offered by the University. It may also be appropriate to look into the possibility of applying reasonable

adjustments/special academic arrangements to enable the student to study effectively. When meeting with the lead member of staff, the student may be accompanied by a friend/family member if they wish.

6.3 It is hoped that in most cases issues can be resolved at this stage, and that students will respond positively, co-operating fully with the process and taking advantage of the support available.

6.4 The informal discussions, advice and any undertakings made by a discipline and/or the student should be documented by means of a Note of Concern (Appendix 2) for the benefit of both the academic discipline and the student.

6.5 A review meeting should be arranged, to take place normally one week after the initial meeting, (if possible by agreement between the lead member of staff and the student) to allow the student to consider their own behaviour and seek advice from the support services available. This meeting will focus on any steps taken by the student to address the concerns. If the concerns have been addressed satisfactorily, this will be noted. Further meetings may be scheduled to continue to monitor the situation/progress and help ensure that continued support is provided to the student to enable them to study effectively. If, however, the concerns have not been addressed, a further review period may be agreed, or the case will move to the next stage of the policy.

6.6 If a student is unable to co-operate with the above process or modify their behaviour, they should be informed that more formal action under Stage 2 of this policy may be considered appropriate.

### **Support for Students in Crisis Procedure Stage 2 – Multidisciplinary Case Review Meeting**

7.1 If the action taken under Stage 1 has not been successful as outlined above, or it is felt that the case is too serious to be dealt with informally, Stage 2 of the policy can be invoked. A Multidisciplinary Case Review Meeting shall be convened by the Dean of Students or Director of Student Services. The meeting shall include the student, appropriate representatives of the student's academic discipline, representatives from Student Services and Students' Union and, when appropriate, other professional services (Appendix 3). All members of the panel will undergo training prior to conducting a case review meeting.

7.2 The following actions will be taken

- Raise a Note of Concern (Appendix 2) or continue a Note of Concern from Stage 1.
- Notify the student in writing of the nature of the concern expressed
- Afford the student the right to respond to the concern
- Arrange a multi-disciplinary case-review meeting (Appendix 3).

7.3 The outcomes of the meeting may include any of the following:

- Proceed to close the Note of Concern if no further action is necessary
- Support a student who wishes to take a Leave of Absence from their studies voluntarily without the need for a Stage 3 response. It is intended that all students voluntarily withdrawing on grounds of crisis should be considered under Stage 2 of this policy
- Escalate to Stage 3 due to concerns about the student's behaviour. This will only be appropriate in the most serious of cases where, for example, evidence of a serious risk to either the health and safety of the student or others has been identified, and it is thought that suspension, exclusion or expulsion of the student may be the appropriate course of

action, or where a particular course of action has been recommended such as part-time study or leave of absence but the student does not comply

## **8. Support for Students in Crisis Procedure Stage 3 –Review Panel**

8.1 This stage of the procedure will only be implemented following a referral from a Stage 2 Multidisciplinary Review Meeting or if, in the opinion of the University President (having consulted as appropriate), initial concerns are raised which are sufficiently serious as to warrant the consideration of the student's suspension, exclusion, expulsion or a period of leave (e.g., if they pose a potential threat to the health and safety of themselves or others, or disruption to the working of the University).

8.2 The Dean of Students in consultation with Dean of College will invoke Stage 3 of the policy as follows:

1. Raise a Note of Concern (Appendix 2)
2. Notify the student in writing of the nature of the concern(s) expressed
3. Afford the student an opportunity to respond to the concern expressed
4. Arrange a Review Panel (Appendix 4) to consider the case.

The possible outcomes are:

- a. The Panel requires the student to take a Leave of Absence from study for an agreed period  
or
- b. The student continues to study, subject to an agreed action plan.

## **9. Temporary Suspension on Grounds of Concern for Students in Crisis**

9.1 The behaviour and actions of a student may be a cause of concern for the safety of the student and/or the safety of others, prompting consideration of the need to exclude the student from the University temporarily, pending further investigation and/or management of the situation. Where it appears in the opinion of the President that there are such grounds for concerns, then they, having sought such advice as they deem appropriate, shall be entitled to suspend a student (without incurring a financial penalty) on the basis that suspension is temporary and necessary to protect the student and the University community (Appendix 5).

## **10. Emergency Situations**

10.1 The safety of individuals is paramount. Occasionally, the behaviour or actions of a student can put themselves or others in proximate danger. It is important that appropriate, timely actions are taken in response. In **urgent/emergency** situations, these timely actions may need to be taken before there is time to fully invoke the provisions of this policy. The fact that the University may invoke other policies shall not prejudice its right to invoke the Support for Students in Crisis Policy.

**REMEMBER: If there is an immediate concern for the safety of any person, this should be reported to the Emergency Services on 999 or 112. Security Services should also be informed via an Emergency Tel. Contact Number 091 493333**



## **11. Return to Study**

11.1 After a period of suspension or leave of absence, the decision as to whether to permit the student to return to study will be made by the Dean of College. In taking such a decision, the Dean of College will seek advice from the Chair of the Review Panel, if Stage 3 of the process resulted in the student taking leave from their studies, and from the Dean of Students (or nominee). The student is informed of their responsibilities, as well as those the University, in order to facilitate an effective return to study.

11.2 To this end, the Dean of Students (or nominee), in consultation with the Dean of College will identify the issues of concern the University has in respect of the student maintaining satisfactory progress. The Dean of Students (or nominee) will require the student to provide an assessment of their ability to manage the demands of studying at University, drawing attention to the nature and extent of the student's previous challenges and the University's concerns about them. The University may require the student to agree to a representative of the University engaging with a relevant medical professional in order to reach a suitable judgement as to whether the student is well enough to return to study at this time. The University also reserves the right to seek independent professional advice.

11.3 Students will be permitted to return if the Dean of Students in consultation with the Dean of College is satisfied that the individual is able to maintain satisfactory progress and comply with any conditions imposed on their return.

11.4 In cases where the University has any continuing concerns about the individual's ability to maintain satisfactory progress, it may require a second professional opinion. In this case a student may be asked to submit themselves for assessment by doctors/specialists nominated by the University, at the University's expense, to allow the situation to be properly evaluated.

11.5 In any case where a student returns to study following the implementation of the Support for Students in Crisis policy the University may decide to propose a number of regular review meetings, between the student and the Dean of Students, which can be used to successfully facilitate a return to study plan. If so, the student must provide their continued co-operation in this respect and such review meetings may continue for part or all of their remaining time at University. All decisions will be documented on the Note of Concern record of the student (Appendix 2).

## **12. Appeals**

12.1 A student has the right to appeal the decision of the Panel to require the student to take leave of absence from study for an agreed period, as the outcome reached following a Support for Students in Crisis Review Panel. Such an appeal will be conducted by the Support for Students in Crisis Policy Appeals Committee (Appendix 6).

## **13. General Matters: Record Keeping, Data Protection, Confidentiality**

13.1 It is good practice for staff to keep brief notes of any interactions with students where there has been guidance or decisions in relation to personal issues, and to inform the student that you are making a record of the encounter. This should apply in particular for students causing concern.

13.2 The record should be dated and written as soon as possible after the interaction with the student. It should state the nature of the interaction and any action taken or advice given. If appropriate, it should also state whether or not the student gave consent for further action. Records should be kept safely in departments for a minimum period of three years after the student graduates and then destroyed unless there is a specific purpose for keeping same. Confidentiality and security of notes should be maintained in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018

as amended.

13.3 Once a Stage 1, 2 or 3 Response of these procedures have been invoked a Note of Concern (Appendix 2) must be raised and retained by the Head of School/Dean, or the Dean of Students as appropriate. In addition to the Note of Concern, for Stages 2 and 3 responses, a written record of all Multi-disciplinary case review meetings and Review Panel meetings shall be completed and retained by the Dean of Students.

#### **14. Methodology and Review**

Relevant policies and procedures from a number of Universities were reviewed during the preparation and revision of this policy. This policy and procedures has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment and will be subject to normal University reviews in light of any changes to current legislation.

# Appendix 1: Risk Assessment Grid

Also consider other aspects which are relevant. The tick-boxes are provided for optional use to identify concerns.

1. Intentional Self-Harm	2. Unintentional Self-Harm	3. Risk From Others	4. Risk To Others	5. Survival	6. Psychological	7. Social
<p><b>Individual factors:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> expressing suicidal intent <input type="checkbox"/> clear plan <input type="checkbox"/> available means <input type="checkbox"/> preparations <input type="checkbox"/> hopelessness <input type="checkbox"/> no confidant, e.g. partner, friends, professionals <input type="checkbox"/> poor coping resources <input type="checkbox"/> lack of blocks to self-harm	<p><b>Consider self-neglect:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> lack of self-care <input type="checkbox"/> not eating or drinking appropriately	<p><b>Consider different types of abuse or exploitation:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> physical <input type="checkbox"/> sexual <input type="checkbox"/> emotional <input type="checkbox"/> racial <input type="checkbox"/> financial <input type="checkbox"/> neglect	<p><b>Consider risk to:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> students <input type="checkbox"/> children & other dependents <input type="checkbox"/> partners <input type="checkbox"/> carers <input type="checkbox"/> staff <input type="checkbox"/> neighbours <input type="checkbox"/> strangers	<p><b>Consider whether the person has problems with:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> a home <input type="checkbox"/> heating for the home <input type="checkbox"/> essential amenities (e.g. washing facilities, toilet, cooker, bed) <input type="checkbox"/> the ability to look after their home <input type="checkbox"/> the ability to keep adequately clean and tidy <input type="checkbox"/> enough food & fluids <input type="checkbox"/> clothing <input type="checkbox"/> enough money to live on <input type="checkbox"/> mobility <input type="checkbox"/> the ability to use public transport <input type="checkbox"/> the ability to cope with physical health problems	<p><b>Consider:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> overactive, aggressive, disruptive or agitated behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> problems with hallucinations & delusions <input type="checkbox"/> cognitive problems with memory, orientation & understanding <input type="checkbox"/> mood problems e.g. depressed, manic, anxious <input type="checkbox"/> problems with reading or writing <input type="checkbox"/> a lack of coping strategies <input type="checkbox"/> attitude to problems <input type="checkbox"/> help seeking behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> spiritual problems <input type="checkbox"/> feelings of alienation	<p><b>Consider problems in relationships with others:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> lack of ability to make or maintain friendships <input type="checkbox"/> lack of supportive relationships <input type="checkbox"/> lack of intimate relationship <input type="checkbox"/> sexual problems <input type="checkbox"/> communication problems <input type="checkbox"/> unable to handle daily hassles
<p><b>Consider risk factors:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> past history of deliberate self-harm <input type="checkbox"/> (i) alcohol/drug abuse OR (ii) diagnosis (e.g. depression, schizophrenia, personality disorder) <input type="checkbox"/> (i) AND (ii) = increased risk <input type="checkbox"/> physical illness/disability <input type="checkbox"/> recent GP contact <input type="checkbox"/> recent psychiatric hospitalisation <input type="checkbox"/> recent loss <input type="checkbox"/> no friends/family <input type="checkbox"/> living alone <input type="checkbox"/> unskilled worker <input type="checkbox"/> unemployment <input type="checkbox"/> older people <input type="checkbox"/> male (especially young males)	<p><b>Consider unsafe behaviour:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> not seeking help for problems posing risk <input type="checkbox"/> refusing appropriate help e.g. not taking medication <input type="checkbox"/> not claiming benefits <input type="checkbox"/> lack of awareness of own safety in home e.g. fire risk <input type="checkbox"/> risky sexual behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> substance misuse <input type="checkbox"/> wandering	<p><b>Consider risk from:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> students <input type="checkbox"/> staff <input type="checkbox"/> relatives <input type="checkbox"/> friends <input type="checkbox"/> neighbours <input type="checkbox"/> strangers <input type="checkbox"/> treatments	<p><b>Consider risk factors:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> current threats, especially to a named person <input type="checkbox"/> history of violence to people/property <input type="checkbox"/> carer's concern <input type="checkbox"/> access to weapons <input type="checkbox"/> no blocks to violence e.g. fear of consequences <input type="checkbox"/> history of arson <input type="checkbox"/> unemployment <input type="checkbox"/> drug/alcohol abuse <input type="checkbox"/> stress <input type="checkbox"/> voices telling person to harm someone <input type="checkbox"/> paranoia <input type="checkbox"/> risky sexual behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> anti-social behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> lack of information about person's history <input type="checkbox"/> no trusting relationship with professionals <input type="checkbox"/> general or specific threats based upon extreme political or religious position		<p><b>Consider problems in activities:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> education <input type="checkbox"/> home/domestic <input type="checkbox"/> leisure <input type="checkbox"/> unpaid work <input type="checkbox"/> paid work <input type="checkbox"/> travel <input type="checkbox"/> lack of personally meaningful life	

Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Mild	<input type="checkbox"/> Mild	<input type="checkbox"/> Mild	<input type="checkbox"/> Mild	<input type="checkbox"/> Mild	<input type="checkbox"/> Mild
	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate
	<input type="checkbox"/> Elevated	<input type="checkbox"/> Elevated	<input type="checkbox"/> Elevated	<input type="checkbox"/> Elevated	<input type="checkbox"/> Elevated	<input type="checkbox"/> Elevated
	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe
	<input type="checkbox"/> Extreme	<input type="checkbox"/> Extreme	<input type="checkbox"/> Extreme	<input type="checkbox"/> Extreme	<input type="checkbox"/> Extreme	<input type="checkbox"/> Extreme

This assessment grid is based on the 'Threshold Assessment Grid (TAG)' developed by the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London (Slade et al., Soc. Psychiatry

PsychiatrEpidemiol (2000) 35: 78-85.

## Appendix 2 Note of Concern Record

Stage 1      2      3      (Circle as Appropriate)

Student's Name:

ID Number:

Address:

Telephone/Contact Details:      Mobile Phone:      Home Phone:

Email:

Date of Birth:

Gender: Male    Female    Other

Concern raised by:

Brief outline of concern:

*Brief factual description of the concern. Specific examples/observations are particularly helpful.*

Comments/Observations of other Academic/Admin/Support Staff:

*Record observations, with specific examples where available, made by staff/others, other than the person who first reported concern. This can include observations/comments made by appropriate professional support services/academic mentors/welfare staff.*

Student's Comments/Observations:

*The student should be invited to record their comments/observations on the concerns and the support plan/follow-up arrangements.*

Agreed Action Plan:

*This may include details of any supports recommended/arranged, as well as agreed outcomes that are desirable and limits of acceptable interactions/behaviour, where appropriate.*

Review Date:

Important Note: (If Leave of Absence or Withdrawal is being considered)

It is important both the student and the University to consider all possible financial implications of a leave of absence or withdrawal from the degree programme. There may be financial implications for student registration/tuition fees or grant if or when a student returns to third level at a later date. Further detailed advice on fees can be obtained from the Fees Office, NUI Galway. The Dean of Students at her/his discretion shall have the authority to grant a fee waiver if deemed necessary considering the circumstances of the case.

- **Declaration: Tick below.**

- I understand the nature of the concern(s) raised by the University, as explained to me and outlined in this document and the possible impact/consequences that this/these concern(s) may have upon my own fitness to study
- I also understand the impact that this/these concern(s) may have upon the community of fellow students and staff who are working and studying at the University
- I have agreed to work towards the action plan outlined above, which has been developed to support me
- I understand that if I am unable or unwilling to carry out the action plan, the University will need to consider taking appropriate or remedial actions, or referral as my situation will require.
- I understand my action plan will be shared with other relevant services within the University. A copy of this Action Plan will therefore be submitted to and retained by the Programme Director or the Head of Discipline or Head of School and/or Dean of Students and such other staff as deemed appropriate by the lead staff member.
- I am aware that this Note of Concern will be retained for as long as is necessary in accordance with this Policy by the Programme Director or Head of School and/or Dean of Students
- Whilst I understand that the University has a duty of care to provide reasonable supports to me, I am responsible for my own health, wellbeing and actions and it is my responsibility to behave in a manner which is appropriate to continue in study
- I agree to this case being reviewed (*insert x days/weeks or months' time*).

Signed: Student  
Signed: Lead Staff Member (Stage 1)  
Dean of Students (Stage 2)  
Chair, Review Panel (Stage 3)

Dated:

## Appendix 3: Stage 2 response – Multidisciplinary case review

### 1. Purpose

A multidisciplinary case review meeting shall be convened by the Dean of Students in consultation with the Dean of College once a Stage 2 response is invoked under this policy and will consider *inter alia* the following matters:

- The student is made fully aware of the nature of the concerns which have been raised
- The student's views are heard and taken into account
- To obtain the views of other relevant parties
- To formulate an agreed support and follow-up plan
- To support a student who wishes to withdraw voluntarily on grounds of crisis
- To determine if escalation to Stage 3 is required.

### 2. Attendees at the Multidisciplinary Case Review

Chair: Dean of Students or Director of Student Services (DSS)

- Dean or College or their nominee (required)
- The student (desirable for at least a portion of the meeting, but the meeting can proceed in their absence if strictly necessary noting that it is required that the student must be given an opportunity either by attendance or in writing to provide the student's views )
- Student friend/other to provide support (desirable)
- If the student opts not to request a friend, they may opt to request an officer of the University (nominated by Dean of Students, one female and one male) to attend (desirable)
- A student with a disability has the right to be accompanied by a support worker (desirable)
- Students' Union Welfare Officer (desirable)
- Individual(s) who reported the concern as per Note of Concern (desirable)
- Members of NUI Galway staff from student services (Student Health, Student Counselling, Disability Support Services, International Office, Accommodation Office) (desirable)
- Other external experts may be required e.g. representative of the Rape Crisis Centre (attendance as needed)
- Administration support provided by the Student Services office (required)

### 3. Conducting the Review

1. The case review meeting is an opportunity to develop a coordinated response that best meets the reasonable support needs of students. The meeting may be a source of stress for the student and staff involved and every care should be taken to ensure that the tone of communication and conduct of the meeting takes account of this.
2. The student will normally be given at least 72 hours' notice of the Review Meeting and informed of the purpose of the meeting. They will also be provided with copies of any documents which will be considered in the meeting and asked to provide any documentation they may wish to be considered.
3. Before the meeting documentary evidence from a relevant objective third party e.g., medical assessment if deemed necessary, may be sought. The student will be encouraged to consent to this, as it will ultimately enable the University to address the student's difficulties in the most effective manner possible and make an accurate assessment of risk.
4. A medical assessment will be used to determine the following matters:
  - the nature and extent of any medical condition from which the student may be suffering
  - their prognosis;



- the extent to which it may affect their ability to maintain satisfactory progress and manage the demands of student life;
  - any impact it may have or risk it may pose to others;
  - whether any additional steps or reasonable accommodation should be taken by the University in light of the medical condition to enable the student to study effectively;
  - whether the student will be receiving any ongoing medical treatment or support.
5. The student will be asked to authorise full disclosure to the University of the results of any medical examination which is relevant to the issue at hand. The University recognises that any such information disclosed will constitute “sensitive data” for the purposes of the Data Protection Acts 1998-2018 (as may be amended) and will be handled, processed and stored accordingly.
6. Should the student refuse to undertake a medical examination if deemed relevant, the University may either continue this policy based on the information already in its possession or use another appropriate means to address the issue.
7. Further information to be provided may include:
- a report of previous actions held by the Dean of College or Dean of Students’ office
  - a risk assessment (Appendix 1)
  - other reasonable and relevant documentation that aids decision making
8. The Student Case Review Meeting may recommend:
- That no further action is required, and the student continues their course of study.
  - To formally monitor the student’s progress for a specified period of time. In this case a solution-oriented action plan will be agreed with the student, clearly outlining any support to be provided to the student and/or steps which the student will need to take to address the concerns identified. Regular review meetings with the student will need to be arranged with a nominated member of staff (to ensure that the action plan is being appropriately followed and/or that reasonable support to enable the student to study effectively is provided). The student will also need to be informed of the consequences of any breaches of the action plan.
  - To recommend part-time study (where appropriate and available) or that special academic arrangements be put in place. Such recommendations would need to be agreed by the College in which the student is registered. The student should also be advised to seek guidance from any of the relevant Student Services or International Office staff, if an international student, to make a fully informed decision if agreeing to a change in circumstance.
  - Where the student is on placement, or their professional programme of study is compromised, the ‘Fitness to Practise Policy’ should be followed.
  - To agree a period of leave of absence from the student’s studies for a mutually agreed period of time, with the consent of the student and without financial penalty. During a leave of absence, undergraduate students in effect ‘stop the clock’ of their period of registration. A student may only take leave from a complete block of study (i.e., a semester or year) and may not take leave during a term or semester, to recommence at the same point. Students (full-time and part-time) may take leave from their programme of study on more than one occasion provided the overall period of leave on the programme does not exceed two years in total.

- To refer the case to the Secretary for Governance and Academic Affairs to be considered under Stage 3 of the Support for Student in Crisis policy.
  - To refer the case to be considered wholly or partially by the Discipline committee.
9. The discussions, advice and any undertakings made by the discipline and the student should be documented by means of a Note of Concern (Appendix 2) for the benefit of both the discipline and the student. The Note of Concern should be sent to the student and the Dean of the College within 7 working days from the date of the meeting, and a copy kept on the student's personal file
10. The effectiveness of the measures taken are reviewed at a follow-up multidisciplinary review meeting. The time interval and date of the review meeting are set by the Dean of Students or Director of Student Services.
11. Following this review and should any of the conditions below exist
- the student is unable or unwilling to commit to the agreed plan
  - the student is unwilling to allow sharing of the agreed plan with the Dean of College
  - or there is sufficient level of concern about the behaviour of the student, which may impact their fitness to continue in University as determined at the multidisciplinary review meeting then the Dean of Students, or Director of Student Services shall invoke a Stage 3 response and arrange for a Review Panel meeting to be called.

## Appendix 4: Stage 3 response – Support for Student in Crisis Review Panel

### 1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the meeting will be to consider the evidence available, including the student's perception of these concerns, and to reach an appropriate decision, action plan or other outcome. The Dean of Students in consultation with the Dean of College shall invoke a Stage 3 response and a meeting of the Review Panel will be convened. The President (having consulted as appropriate) may refer a student directly to Stage 3, if the concern is of a very serious nature.

### 2. Membership

Academic Council shall nominate for a period of four years a panel of fifteen people, of whom 12 will be academic staff from the four Colleges (3 per College) and 3 will be student representatives, ensuring that among the membership of the panel there is gender balance and there are sufficient members capable of conducting a case through the medium of the Irish language. The Registrar & Deputy President shall make nominations from this panel to the Review Panel and the Appeal Committee (Appendix 6) and these nominees will normally hold office for four years.

The Review Panel shall be constituted as follows:

- Chairperson, appointed by the President or Designated Authority
- Academic Secretary, or nominee, as secretary to the panel
- Three members, selected by the Registrar & Deputy President, from the panel nominated by the Academic Council
- Two student representatives, normally members of the Student Union Executive.

The Appeals Committee shall be constituted as follows:

- Chairperson, appointed by the President or Designated Authority
- Secretary to the Appeals panel, nominated by the Academic Secretary
- Two members, selected by the Registrar & Deputy President, from the panel nominated by the Academic Council
- One student representative, normally the Student Union Executive.

None of the members of the Appeals Panel will have served on the initial Review Panel.

### 3. Attendees at the Review meeting

- Chairperson
- Secretary
- 3 academic staff members of the Review Panel
- 2 student representatives of the Review Panel
- The student and their representative/fellow student/family member (desirable for a least a portion of the meeting).

### 4. Conducting the Review

4.1. The Chair will fix a date for a formal meeting of the Panel to hear the case.

4.2 The student will be invited in writing to attend and given at least 7 days' notice of the Review Meeting and informed of the purpose of the meeting. They will also be provided with

copies of any documents, which will be considered in the meeting and asked to provide any documentation they may wish to be considered at least two days in advance of the meeting.

4.3 The student may be accompanied at the meeting by a Students' Union representative, a fellow student or family member or others as appropriate. Students with a disability may also be accompanied by a support worker where required.

4.4 Any conflicts of interest shall be considered and dealt with as appropriate.

4.5 The Review Panel will order its proceedings at its discretion and may call witnesses and institute enquiries to assist its deliberations, including Student Services staff working with the student, and which may include requesting further professional assessments including medical. It will also consider an updated risk assessment where appropriate. The Review Panel shall consider relevant submissions and records already existing from earlier Stage 1 or Stage 2 responses relating to the Student. It shall also consider submissions from the student, when available. Expert, independent opinion shall be sought from suitably qualified professionals, who do not have a conflict of interest where required. The final decision on the appropriate course of action is made by the Review Panel having considered all relevant information pertaining to the student's case.

4.5 A simple majority applies in the event of non-unanimous opinion of members of the Panel. The outcomes possible following a Review Panel are listed in Section 4.6 below. A copy of any outcome reached giving reasons for the decision shall be sent Registrar and Deputy President, via the Secretary for Governance and Academic Affairs and to the student as soon as reasonably practicable.

4.6 The decision may include one or more of the following:

- 1 To formally monitor the student's progress for a specified period of time. In this case, the Panel will provide the student with an agreed action plan, outlining any support to be provided to the student to address the concerns identified, and/or any steps, which the student will need to take. This will be a new action plan for a duration of a maximum of four weeks. Regular review meetings with the student will need to be arranged with a nominated member of staff (to ensure that the action plan is being appropriately met and/or that reasonable support to enable the student to study effectively is being provided). The student will also need to be informed of the consequences of any breaches of the action plan.
- 2 That, following consultation with the academic discipline, the student should convert from full-time to part-time study with support; special academic arrangements are put in place; or an intermission of their studies occurs. The student should be advised to seek guidance from appropriate services (Student Services, Fees offices) on the implications of such a measure. The student will be informed of the consequences should these arrangements fail to remedy the concerns identified to the University's satisfaction.
- 3 To recommend that the President exercise his/her authority to suspend or exclude the student.
- 4 Any other action considered to be appropriate and proportionate.

4.7 The outcome of the hearing shall also be reported to Academic Council without naming the student in question for privacy reasons.

4.8 The discussions, advice and any undertakings made by the discipline and the student should be documented by means of a "Note of Concern" record sheet (Appendix 2) for the benefit of both the discipline and the student.

## Appendix 5: Temporary Suspension

Where it appears in the opinion of the President, having consulted as appropriate, that there are sufficiently serious grounds for concerns about a student's behavior (e.g., if they pose a potential threat to the health and safety of themselves or others, or disruption to the working of the University), then he/she, shall be entitled to suspend a student on the following basis: -

1. That suspension is temporary and necessary to protect the University community and that on balance, the President is of a view that the duty of care owed to others is overriding in the particular circumstances.
2. A suspension may be verbal and to take effect as the President deems appropriate and shall be confirmed in writing as soon as is practicable.
3. That any such suspension is reported to the next scheduled meeting of Academic Council by the President and is reviewed by them, in consultation as may be appropriate, at least fortnightly thereafter. The President will update the Academic Council at scheduled meetings for the duration of the temporary suspension.
4. That suspension shall not be regarded as an indication as to whether or not the grounds for concern is proven.
5. That suspension may be limited to certain premises, placements or University activities or modules of studies.
6. That every reasonable effort is made to continue to support the student's academic studies so that, in so far as possible, the student is not disadvantaged academically during a period of temporary suspension. Where it is not feasible to provide academic support, the President will continue to provide a report to Academic Council at each scheduled meeting of the Academic Council while the suspension remains in place.
7. That suspension shall be for no longer than the time necessary for a matter to have been considered and decided upon under this Support for Student in Crisis policy or for an appeal to have been heard and decided upon.
8. That this power shall be exercised with caution and with due regard to natural justice and fair procedures.
9. Where the President exercises the power of suspension, s/he shall, as soon as practicable, notify the Dean of College and/or the Dean of Students who shall under Stage 3 call a meeting of the Review Panel soon as practicable from the date of the suspension

## Appendix 6: Appeal

1. A student may appeal the decision of the Review Panel to the Support for Students in Crisis Policy Appeals Committee for a decision made under Clause 4.6 of Appendix 4. An appeal against the decision may be made on the grounds of a material procedural irregularity which has demonstrably affected the outcome or there is new material information available, which one of the parties was unable, for valid reasons, to provide, when the matter was being investigated and which would have significantly affected the outcome. .
2. Such appeals must be in writing and lodged with the Chair of the Appeals Committee within 5 working days from the date of the posting of a decision by the Review Panel to the student. The appeal must state in sufficient detail the grounds of the appeal.
3. The Academic Council shall establish an Appeals Committee to consider any appeals arising from a decision of the Review Panel. Academic Council shall nominate for a period of four years a panel of fifteen people as outlined in Appendix 4, ensuring that among the membership of the panel there is gender balance and there are sufficient members capable of conducting a case through the medium of the Irish language.
4. The Registrar & Deputy President shall make nominations of 3 members from this panel to the Support for Students in Crisis Policy Appeals Committee; the President shall nominate a Chair from the Support for Students in Crisis Policy Panel.
5. The quorum of the Appeal Committee for any meeting or hearing shall be 3 members.
6. No member of the Review Panel for a student shall be a member of the Appeals Committee for that student.
7. Where an Appeal is made in accordance with the above, then the decision made by the Review Panel shall be deferred until the appeal is determined. The student shall be permitted to continue in study pending outcome of the appeal and during this period of deferral. This provision for deferral does not apply in relation to a temporary suspension where in the opinion of the President that suspension is, on balance, necessary, to protect the public and the duty of care owed to others is overriding in the particular circumstances.
8. On receipt of an appeal, the Chair of the Appeals Committee shall as soon as practicable send notice of the appeal to the Appeal Committee and to the Review Panel and request the Panel furnish to the Appeal Committee an accurate summary of the evidence and any submission tendered at the Panel review, including Notes of Concern from preceding Level 1 or Level 2 responses, the findings of the Review Panel and the outcomes imposed on the student. The Chairperson of the Review Panel, or his or her nominee, shall furnish this to the Appeal Committee so far as is practicable within 10 days of being so requested to do so by the Chair of the Appeals Committee.
9. The Appeal Committee will, at its absolute discretion, consider the Appeal in such a manner it deems appropriate to the circumstances of the case, having regard to fairness and due process.
10. The Appeal Committee shall not be obliged to hear or accept further submissions from the student, whether written or oral, but if it agrees to do so, the student must be notified in writing and that notification must specify the date, time and location for the making of any oral submission or the date for the delivery of written submissions which date, in either case, must not, except in exceptional circumstances, be earlier than 10 days or more than 30

days from the date of such notification, unless stated otherwise.

11. The Appeal Committee shall have the power, should it see fit, to hold a fresh hearing into the matter.
12. The Appeal Committee shall determine the appeal and make whatever decision it considers appropriate in the circumstances on the balance of probabilities. The Appeal Committee shall have power to revoke or amend the decision of the Review Panel in full or part. The Appeal Committee may direct the Review Panel to reconsider the position further.
13. The decision of the Appeal Committee shall be final and binding and shall be reported to the Registrar and Deputy President to Academic Council.