

The British University in Egypt

# **Fitness To Study Procedure**

## Key Policy Information:

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## Fitness to Study Simplified Flowchart

Cause for concern identified / student's fitness to study called into question by any member of University Staff

SAR, VD Teaching and Learning or Student Services Staff make initial approach to discuss concerns / student signposted to support services e.g. The Student Hub or Academic Services

Case escalated if concerns persist.

Case reviewed by The Student Hub staff and Fitness to Study Panel convened as necessary (AS / Student Affairs informed as necessary)

Fitness to Study Panel agrees support, mitigation and required standards of behaviour with student, as necessary OR recommends student suspends or transfers from their studies (AS / Student Affairs informed as necessary)

## 1. Understanding Fitness to Study

- 1.1. The British University in Egypt aims to ensure that all students benefit fully from their University experience in terms of both academic learning and personal development. However, there are occasions when students can face challenges which affect their studies and their wider participation in University life. This procedure is designed to support students facing challenges while ensuring that the wider BUE community is also able to carry on with its normal activities.
- 1.2. If there are concerns that a student may not be fit to study and/or participate in University life, wherever possible, action will be taken to identify the issues involved and to identify support available to the student which may help them to overcome those difficulties.

## 2. Who is covered by this procedure?

- 2.1. This procedure applies to:
  - a) current students registered and/or enrolled with the University;
  - b) a student on suspension

## 3. Who is responsible for this procedure?

- 3.1. The Office of the Provost has overall responsibility for the procedure to ensure that its provisions continue to meet required standards and reflect best practice.
- 3.2. The Director of Student Services will review this procedure from time to time, usually every two years, to ensure that its provisions continue to meet required standards and reflect best practice.

## 4. When Fitness to Study is used

- 4.1. In most instances, students are considered fit to study when the following applies to them:

- a) They are able to engage with and benefit from their academic studies with a reasonable chance of obtaining the award they are registered for;
  - b) Their behaviour does not negatively impact other members of the University community (e.g. students, staff) in their day-to-day business;
  - c) They are not considered to be a risk to their own or others' health and safety.

If any of 4.1 a-c are called into question by the Dean (or nominee) or the Director of Student Services, then a student may be assessed as to whether they are fit to study.

- 4.2. Examples of instances when a student's fitness to study may be assessed include, but are not limited to:

- a) Impact of disabilities, mental health challenges and long-term health conditions
  - b) Lack of engagement with teaching and learning activities
  - c) Disruptive behaviour or behaviour that leads to concerns of underlying difficulties
  - d) Unreasonable demands being placed on staff and/or other students
  - e) Self-referral by a student
  - f) Identification of issues by an external party outside of the University

If staff are unsure about the applicability of 4.1 or 4.2 in relation to a student, they should contact the Director of Student Services or their Faculty Senior Assistant Registrar

- 4.3. When there is a concern over a student's fitness to study, any member of staff should communicate this to either the Senior Assistant Registrar, Vice Dean Teaching and Learning or Student Services Staff for an initial approach to try and discuss the concerns with the student in a supportive and understanding manner. This discussion, if possible, should clearly identify the causes of concern and encourage the student to discuss it from their perspective. In addition, students should be signposted to student support services e.g. The Student Hub, Personal Academic Tutors, Academic Services.
- 4.4. In some instances, students will respond positively, modify their behaviour accordingly and follow up with support services as necessary. Sometimes students may be unaware that their behaviour is causing concern.
- 4.5. If a student's behaviour continues to cause concern or it is felt a more formal mechanism of support is needed staff should communicate their concerns to both senior staff within the Faculty e.g. Dean (or nominee)/Vice Dean Teaching and Learning or the Director of Student Services.
- 4.6. If there is a concern that the student's immediate health and safety is at risk, then staff should contact emergency services in the first instance. Once that has happened, staff should seek to contact either the Director of Student Services, Director of Estates and Facilities or the Head of Clinics as soon as reasonably possible.

## 5. Fitness to Study Panel

- 5.1. Following consultation with the Dean (or nominee), the Director of Student Services may convene a Fitness to Study Panel. The purpose of the Panel will be to:
  - a) Outline concerns to the student
  - b) Allow the student to explain the situation from their perspective
  - c) Agree support, mitigation and required standards of behaviour, as necessary
  - d) Ensure that the student understands the possible implications and outcomes if concerns persist.
- 5.2. Students will be informed of the Panel meeting usually no less than five working days before the Panel is due to meet. If the student agrees the Panel may be held at shorter notice.
- 5.3. The composition of the Panel will normally be Director of Student Services (or nominee), Senior Assistant Registrar from the Faculty or a Faculty Representative (normally the Vice Dean Teaching and Learning or Head of Department), and the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Students.
- 5.4. Students should inform the University as soon as possible if they cannot, for good reason, attend the Panel. If a student does not attend, and does not offer good reason for doing so, the Panel will go ahead without them and a decision will be reached on the basis of the evidence available. What constitutes good reason is entirely at the discretion of the University.
- 5.5. A record of the meeting, covering the main areas discussed, but not a verbatim account, will usually be sent to the student within 10 working days from the date of the meeting.

## 6. Companion at Meetings

- 6.1. A student may be accompanied to the Panel by any member of the University including a representative from The Student Hub team, a member of the Student Union or a fellow student. Companions may take notes, make representations, and ask questions on a student's behalf, but are not entitled to answer questions on a student's behalf.
- 6.2. Students may be asked to choose a different companion if, for example, their chosen companion may cause a conflict of interest or if their presence may prejudice the meeting. This decision is entirely at the discretion of the University.

## 7. Legal Representation

7.1. The Fitness to Study Procedure is not a legal procedure but is instead a formal mechanism by which consideration is given to student's welfare alongside the usual running of the University. The purpose of the Fitness to Study Procedure is to best support students and assist the University in reaching a decision based on the available evidence. Legal representation is not, therefore, permitted at meetings taking place at any stage under this procedure.

## 8. Suspension of Studies

8.1. In some instances, the Panel may decide it is in the student's best interests if s/he suspends their studies for a period of time and will recommend this to the student, normally in consultation with their parents. If this is the case any conditions for return to study will also be communicated to the student e.g. relevant medical evidence of fitness to study or the requirement to engage with University support.

8.2. Suspension of studies will normally happen in consultation with both Academic Services and Student Affairs teams to consider the impact on a student's record, registration, and academic standing.

8.3. Suspension of studies will normally be communicated to a student's family in writing.

8.4. Further information on suspension of studies can be found under section 2 of the University Undergraduate Academic Regulations available at the Academic Services page <https://www.bue.edu.eg/depofacademicsservices/>

## 9. Significant Concerns

9.1. Where there are significant concerns that a student's behaviour may have a serious and immediate impact on their ability to study or the day to day running of the University, it may be necessary to refer these cases to the Office of the President and Vice Chancellor and/or the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Teaching and Learning.

## 10. Reasonable Adjustments

10.1. In most instances, students declaring a disability, mental health challenge or long-term health condition are supported through Reasonable Adjustments. A Reasonable Adjustment seeks to ensure that all students are able to demonstrate the full extent of their academic abilities, irrespective of a disability, mental health challenge or long-term health condition.

10.2. The implementation of Reasonable Adjustments aims to allow students to access Higher Education without disadvantage but still within a framework of academic standards. Fitness to Study will only normally be assessed as per sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this procedure.

10.3. Further information on Reasonable Adjustments can be provided by Student Services. If a student is unsure which procedure they should use, they should contact The Student Hub for further information and guidance so they can discuss the support options available to them.

## 11. Confidentiality

11.1. Any information relating to a student's Fitness to Study is treated confidentially. Where information needs to be shared with members of the University community (e.g. Academic Services, Accommodation, Library services) in order to facilitate support for the student, this will be done, wherever possible, on a 'need-to-know' basis.

11.2. Where additional support is required, information may also need to be shared with external providers

such as assessment centres or support providers to help facilitate support. This will only be carried out with the student's permission.

## 12. Use of data from Fitness to Study

12.1. The University may collect data on Fitness to Study and use the data for:

- a) internal reporting, evaluation, learning and training; and
- b) external discussion with regulators in the Higher Education sector.

12.2. The data used by the University for the purposes set out in Section 12.1 a) and b) will be anonymized wherever possible. Personal Data will not be shared with any other third parties unless the University has a legal obligation or is otherwise permitted to do so.

## 13. Support for students with this Procedure

13.1. Students are encouraged to engage with support services and take up any appropriate support available to them. For more information or any questions, students should contact their Faculty Student Office or The Student Hub ([thestudenthub@bue.edu.eg](mailto:thestudenthub@bue.edu.eg))