

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER STUDENT CRISIS INTERVENTION AND EMERGENCY CONTACT PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. The University of Westminster is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of its students, colleagues and others associated with the University community. This commitment includes ensuring that adequate arrangements are in place to promote positive physical and mental health and to compassionately support students who may be experiencing difficulties that affect their wellbeing and safety, especially where these have a significant impact on their engagement with the educational opportunities provided.
2. The Crisis Intervention and Emergency Contact procedure applies in situations where significant mental health, psychological, personal or emotional difficulties may have a substantial and disruptive impact on the wellbeing and safety of an individual student and on others around them. It is intended to ensure a responsible and sensitive approach to managing situations which require immediate and proactive intervention to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of students, colleagues or other third parties. It indicates how these actions may be taken alongside other processes to manage situations of problematic behaviour, though the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure.
3. The procedure also outlines the steps that may be taken if concerns about an individual student need to be passed on to other external agencies and, where appropriate, to involve the student's nominated Emergency Contact in providing intervention and support.
4. This procedure is aligned with the University's framework for promoting positive student wellbeing and relevant University policies and procedures, including:
 - [Data Protection Policy](#)
 - [Fitness to Study Procedure](#)
 - [Personal Tutoring Policy](#)
 - [Safeguarding Framework](#)
 - [Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)
 - [Student Code of Conduct](#)
 - [Student Complaints Procedure](#)
 - [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#)

Emergency action and reporting

5. In a situation where it is believed that a student's behaviour presents an immediate risk to themselves or others, Emergency Services should be contacted by dialing 999. If the situation is onsite, Security should be contacted via Reception/security desks or calling 020 7911 5000, ext. 5555 to inform them of the incident and action taken and to alert them that an ambulance has been called so that they can direct emergency staff on arrival to the location of the incident.
6. The person alerting the Emergency Services and Security officer should immediately:
 - make a record of the details of the incident and action taken,
 - report the incident in the University's accident/incident reporting (OSHENS) systems,
 - forward an incident report/reference via the student-wellbeing@westminster.ac.uk mailbox.
7. On receipt of the report an appropriate manager in Student Support and Residential Life will take responsibility for ensuring appropriate follow up. The manager will ensure that contact is maintained with the student to monitor developments and to offer additional support from specialist colleagues within the University. This manager will identify key colleagues who need to be notified so that appropriate arrangements can be made for academic matters, for example, if the student needs to take some time away from their studies for recuperation and/or requires mitigating circumstances to be considered for assessed work. Depending on the circumstances, these may include:
 - Head of School/Senior Tutor
 - Disability Tutor/Personal Tutor
 - Course Leader
8. The relevant Registry Office, Retention and Engagement Office and Visa Compliance Team (as appropriate) may be informed if it is necessary to action suspensions/interruptions from study.

Intervention and guidance for emerging and on-going concerns

9. In situations where a student's behaviour or well-being causes concern but does not present an immediate crisis, a referral may be made to the Wellbeing Adviser team via the Wellbeing Link referral form (See Appendix A) or Safeguarding Leads (See Appendix B).
10. It may also be appropriate for initial intervention to be managed locally through the provisions of the University's Fitness to Study Procedure: *"Emerging or initial concerns about an individual student's health, safety, behaviour or mental wellbeing should be reported to the relevant School (Registry) Manager and Senior Personal Tutor who, with guidance from Student and Academic Services, will recommend an appropriate person to approach the student to raise and discuss the specific issues with them in a supportive and understanding manner"*. Depending on the circumstances, this may be the personal tutor, course leader specialist service colleague or Residential Services Manager.
11. Specialist staff within Student Support and Residential Life would be able to provide guidance on the appropriateness of applying the Fitness to Study Procedure and how to approach a Stage 1 intervention under the provisions of this Procedure.
12. If the student's behaviour is such that under normal circumstances they would have been subject to the University's Student Disciplinary Regulations, this may remain the most appropriate course of action, even if there is evidence that the student has identified mental health or other diagnosed conditions.

Crisis intervention for serious concern

13. If a student refuses to access support and/or continues to exhibit behaviour which is disruptive or causes concern (for example, displaying bizarre/irrational behaviour) or indicates that the student may be at risk (such as, significant incidents requiring emergency service intervention, continued disclosures of intent to engage in behaviour that risks harm to themselves or others), the Head of Student Support and Residential Life or Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager (or nominees) should be informed. Immediate action (ref. paragraph 5) should also be considered. (See Appendix C - Key Contacts for Guidance).
14. This manager will determine whether the matter should be referred through Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy (Level 2) or Crisis Intervention Procedure provisions.
15. It may also be appropriate to consider the matter under the provisions of the Student Disciplinary Process. This will be determined through liaison between the Head of Student Support and Academic Standards Manager (or nominees).
16. If a Crisis Intervention response is considered necessary, the Head of Student Support and Residential Life, Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager (or their nominee) will instruct and monitor a response to the situation through coordinated casework, involving the active intervention of member(s) of relevant specialist services and the Senior Tutor/Disability Tutor/ personal tutor.
17. There will be necessary and proportionate sharing of information between staff colleagues involved. These communications will be strictly on a “need to know” basis to ensure that any intervention provided by these services is informed by appropriate and accurate detail of the student’s circumstances.
18. An appropriate colleague will attempt to contact or meet the student to offer support and, in conjunction with the Head of Student Support and Residential Life, Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager (or their nominee) will make a decision regarding proactive referral to a GP and/or other appropriate statutory agencies. This may include using established referral systems with partner agencies, or by alerting other relevant health services.
19. An identified colleague will act as a point of liaison with the GP to ensure that all relevant information and developments are communicated and, as appropriate, to receive updates on referral action. The data sharing would depend on circumstances and the nature of the information being shared, and by whom.
20. Where necessary and appropriate, support will also be offered to those students and colleagues who may be affected by the situation.

Notifying an Emergency Contact

21. The University requests all students to nominate a chosen Emergency contact as part of the enrolment process (Appendix D). The Emergency Contact will be a person nominated by the student to be contacted in the event of serious concern about their health or wellbeing - as recorded on their online student record (or

in other records systems, if more up to date). This will not necessarily be the student's next of kin; but may be a trusted other relative or friend.

22. Contact will be made with the person named as the Emergency Contact if it is determined that to do so would immediately help alleviate a situation that would pose a serious risk to the student's safety, health and wellbeing. Contact may also be made to make this nominated contact aware of the immediate consequences of an emergency situation so that they might assist and offer support to the student concerned.
23. In cases where it becomes apparent that there is serious concern for the safety and wellbeing of an individual student, the Head of Student Support and Residential Life (or nominee) will alert the Senior Tutor (Disability Tutor where relevant) and Associate Head of College. A decision will be made by the Associate Head of College, with advice from the Head of Student Support and Residential Life, on whether the student's nominated Emergency Contact should be informed. In reaching this decision, The University will have due regard of its responsibility under statutory provisions (for example, of General Data Protection Regulations) and other University third party contact processes (e.g. arrangements for students who are under the age of 18).
24. Where appropriate, the student's GP or other NHS mental health service supporting the student may be consulted to provide further evidence that might assist in this decision.
25. Communication with the Emergency Contact will normally be initiated by the Head of Student Support and Residential Life (or nominee). Essential information only will be shared about the University's concerns; the involvement of the Emergency Contact will be requested to provide support and intervention that might help to reduce risk for the student.
26. The student will be made aware of the decision to communicate with their Emergency Contact (unless this is judged to present a potential risk of harm).
27. A student can request that contact is made with the Emergency Contact at any point – ideally this will be in writing.

Temporary suspension of studies

28. Where, in the opinion of the University, the concern is sufficiently serious, the case may be considered under the suspension provisions of the University's Fitness to Study Procedure. Required suspension will normally only be considered where the student's behaviour poses a serious risk to the health, safety, welfare or property of the student or others.
29. If the student's behaviour has caused disruption in University residential accommodation, it may also be necessary to reach a decision on whether immediate temporary exclusion from the residence is required. In reaching such a decision, due care and consideration will be taken to avoid the possibility that the student may be placed in a more vulnerable situation through these actions.

Return to study arrangements

30. If a student has a period of absence from the University for recuperation in the context of crisis intervention circumstances, they will be expected to produce appropriate confirmation of their health and ability to resume studying, as required under the Fitness to Study Procedure.
31. Specialist staff within Student and Academic Services will be available to provide advice and coordinate support with adjustments to facilitate the student's transition back onto the course, particularly in relation to any adjustments that might be required under the Equality Act.
32. The Return to Study provisions of the Fitness to Study Procedure will be followed, with appropriate liaison with the relevant Registry team.

Complaints and appeals

33. A student who is dissatisfied with actions taken by the University through this procedure (e.g. liaison with external services, contacting Emergency Contact) may raise a concern through the University's Student Complaints Procedure. Concerns regarding actions taken under the provisions of the Fitness to Study Procedure should be raised through the appeal mechanisms of that procedure.
34. A student who is subject to emergency suspension, exclusion from residences or disciplinary processes will be informed in writing of the process that may be followed under relevant University procedures to appeal against these decisions.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

35. The operation of the Crisis Intervention and Emergency Contact Procedure will be monitored by the Student Safeguarding Leads. This will include data reporting arrangements, including relevant demographic analysis of students who are referred through these procedures for Equality Impact assessment purposes.
36. Processes will be evaluated through feedback from students, colleagues and relevant third parties who have an interest in the operation of the Procedure.
37. Feedback and data on the operation of the Crisis Intervention and Emergency Contact Procedure will be used to inform updates and amendments to ensure its continued effectiveness.
38. This procedure will be reviewed and revised where necessary on an annual basis. Significant changes will be reported to the Wellbeing Sub-Group of the University's Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee.

Approved by Safety Health and Wellbeing Committee:	September 2019
Updated to include references to Wellbeing Link referral system:	April 2020
Updated to include references to Safeguarding process map:	April 2021
Updated references to policies and formatting to improve accessibility	October 2022

Appendices

A. Wellbeing Link Reporting form (accessed via colleague-only SharePoint Site)

<https://universityofwestminster.sharepoint.com/sites/00270/SitePages/Wellbeing%20referral%20form%20-%20worried%20about%20a%20student%20use%20this%20resource%20link.aspx>

B. Safeguarding Process Map (accessed via colleague-only SharePoint Site)

https://universityofwestminster.sharepoint.com/sites/00270/Shared%20Documents/Safeguarding_Process_Map_FINAL.pdf

C. Key email contacts for guidance in Student and Academic Services (last updated October 2022)

Roles	Email
Student Wellbeing Advisers	student-wellbeing@westminster.ac.uk
Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager (Designated Safeguarding Lead)	Carmel Hendricks C.Hendricks@westminster.ac.uk
Counselling Service Manager	counselling@westminster.ac.uk
Mental Health Adviser	counselling@westminster.ac.uk
Residential Life Manager	studentaccommodation@westminster.ac.uk
Head of Student Support and Residential Life (Designated Safeguarding Lead)	Sally Olohan S.Olohan@westminster.ac.uk

D. Enrolment screen text requesting Emergency Contact information:

The University's online enrolment process requires the following details to be entered:

- **(Emergency Contact Details):** *[Text Box for name and contact details]*
- **(Explanatory text in pop up comment):** *This person may be contacted by the University in the event of serious concern about your health and wellbeing. Please ensure they are willing to be an Emergency Contact before providing their details.*