



WYCLIFFE HALL

Welfare (Fitness to Study and Train) Policy

Introduction

Wycliffe Hall is committed to the well-being of all members of the Hall community. We strive to make the Hall a safe and open environment in which all its members can thrive. Wycliffe Hall seeks to provide an environment conducive to study and training, and expects its staff and students to contribute positively to such an environment. Inevitably, however, situations will occasionally arise when, for medical, emotional, or situational reasons, students struggle to engage at a satisfactory level academically, ministerially (where appropriate), or relationally.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the 'Welfare (Suspension of Study) Policy' which deals with cases where students choose to withdraw temporarily from study.

It is also intended to be read alongside relevant University policies and regulations as well as the University's Guidance on Confidentiality in Student Health and Welfare.¹

Definitions

'Fitness to Study and Train' is understood to mean a student's fitness to:

- commence, continue with or return to a course of academic study/ministerial training;
- meet the reasonable academic and ministerial requirements of the course or programme including attendance at lectures of 80% minimum;
- meet the reasonable social and behavioural requirements of a student member without her/his health – meaning here and throughout this document, their physical, mental, emotional or psychological health – or state having an unacceptably deleterious condition upon the health, safety and/or welfare of the student and/or other students and/or University or college or Hall staff (notwithstanding adjustments required by law).

For the purpose of these procedures, "student" includes any person studying on an undergraduate course of study supplied by or in connection with Wycliffe Hall, with the exception of students on the SCIO Visiting Student programme, who should follow procedures outlined in the SCIO Programme Handbook, including the regulations therein, Course materials or other course documentation as is from time to time issued. Graduate students' fitness to study is covered by departmental procedures, but the fitness to train of ordinands on graduate programmes is covered by the procedures below.

"Risk" means a risk that a person involved in student health and welfare considers is reasonably possible to occur given the facts within their knowledge. They need not conclude an outcome is more likely than not, only that they reasonably believe an outcome is possible. In addition, "serious harm" means:

¹ See <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/regulations> and https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/field/field_document/SWSS%20Confidentiality%20Statement.pdf.

- a. death or serious mental or physical injury, including from illegal drug use and sexual assault, and/or
- b. suicide (whether or not there is or has been an attempt or intent to end their life), and/or
- c. self-harm; and/or
- d. endangering the life, health or safety of any other person.

Welfare

Student Health: All residential students are required to register with a local GP. The College doctor, at present Dr Lawrence Leaver, is available for appointments at the Jericho Health Centre. Students are not required to be registered with the College doctor, and may wish to retain their home practice, but the College doctors have an understanding of the collegiate and University systems which may prove useful.

Student Wellbeing: Every student shall have the right to access the pastoral support of a Fellowship Group Tutor. Both ordinands and independent students are assigned to a Fellowship Group, and we expect ordinands to participate fully in all Fellowship Group activities. Independent students have the right to participate in Group activities if they so choose, but whether they do so or not, they still have access to their FG Tutor.

The Fellowship Group Tutor will normally be the first point of call for pastoral support and advice. However, we recognise that there may be times when a student is unable or unwilling to look to their FG Tutor for support, and in these cases students are encouraged to approach any other tutor for support. In addition, the Hall has a series of external pastoral advisers whom a student may contact for advice and support. These are listed in the Handbook. Students may also self-refer to the Oxford University counselling service if they choose.

Other first sources of help and advice within college:

- Issues relating to harassment, equality and diversity, sexual violence or general welfare: Liz Hoare or Katy Routh
- Issues relating to disability: Katy Routh
- Issues relating to safeguarding: John Olson

Helpful guidance for Oxford University students about welfare issues and other sources of support can be found at: www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare.

Confidentiality and Data Protection in relation to Welfare

The Hall's Data Protection Policy applies at all points during the processes detailed herein.

However, the Hall will in all cases follow the University's Guidance on Confidentiality in Health and Welfare, which considers disclosure of personal information about students, including special category data about a student's physical or mental health, where welfare staff reasonably believe that a risk of serious harm to the student or others exists.

In general, information relating to the health and welfare of an individual will amount to special category data (as defined in the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)) and must be kept confidential and only disclosed with consent. The University's Guidance sets out the basis for dealing with exceptions to that general rule, and therefore where the Hall's Data Protection Policy will be superseded by this Guidance.

It should be noted that a significant amount of sharing of personal data relating to students is already permitted and envisaged between University departments and Colleges under both the Terms and Conditions of the student's contract with the University (at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract>) and The student Privacy Notice (incorporated as part of that contract) at <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/student-privacy-policy>. The Student Privacy Notice was updated in 2020 to clarify limited circumstances in which special category data related to health might be shared even if students have not consented to it (i.e. where there is a risk of serious harm), providing the safeguards within the Student Privacy Notice and this Guidance are followed.

Confidentiality and Ordination Training

This policy additionally notes that the University Guidance refers to "Students on Professional Courses", and states that "Special considerations apply to students on courses leading to qualifications for professions governed by codes of conduct and health intended to protect the public for example, medicine and teaching".²

Those training for ordination should expect that DDOs, sponsoring Bishops, Directors of Ministry, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officers of the Oxford, sending, and receiving dioceses, may need to be informed of any incidents or concerns that the Hall has, as relevant/appropriate, and that reports may be kept within a student's personal file. The Hall may also seek the advice of Diocesan Safeguarding Officers or other parties when dealing with a risk of serious harm.

It is also noted that it is the responsibility of the Hall to manage communication and disclosure to the diocese(s), but all reasonable efforts will be made to notify the student involved before this happens, unless in an emergency or where legal constraints mean this is not possible.

The Fitness to Study and Train process

N.B. In urgent cases and at the Principal's discretion, the first level may be bypassed.

N.B. This policy is superseded by the Hall's safeguarding policy: in cases where issues of safeguarding have arisen, the safeguarding policy will apply as well as or in place of this policy.

1a Level one a: Informal Approach by FG Tutor

It may be appropriate for a FG Tutor to approach a student in cases where the Tutor is concerned about the student's wellbeing, behaviour, or academic progress. The Tutor will discuss appropriate support with the student. Support may include but is not limited to:

- providing advice to the student regarding emotional, physical or spiritual self-care;
- providing or directing the student to appropriate forms of support;
- referring the student to the College Doctor or the Counselling Services or Disability Services etc., as appropriate;
- temporarily suspending the student from study by agreement with the student, to allow the situation to be resolved.

In this case, the student and the FG Tutor (or other pastoral supporter) will consider how best the student can be supported. In many cases, the FG tutor or other pastoral supporter will wish to seek advice from others: either members of the Hall community or external services.

² Section 9 of

https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/field/field_document/SWSS%20Confidentiality%20Statement.pdf.

1b Level one b: Informal Approach by another member of the Hall

Another student or employee of the Hall who is concerned about the student in the ways detailed above should speak to the student's FG Tutor. In such cases the person reporting concern should also refer to the harassment or safeguarding policies, where appropriate. The Tutor will then implement level one a: Informal Approach by Tutor.

Except where the harassment or safeguarding policies are relevant, informal resolution is the preferred first step, with urgent exceptions at the Principal's discretion as noted above.

2 Level two: Formal procedure Resolved by agreement

Another student or Hall employee may avail themselves of the provisions of level two of the policy if they feel either that the attempt to address the issue at level one has failed to resolve it adequately, or if they feel that the severity and urgency of the issue warrants this action. To access the provisions of the policy at this level, they will need to provide the student's FG Tutor with a written Statement of Concern, and be prepared for the FG Tutor to raise the matter with the student and for the student to see the written statement. The FG Tutor will, with appropriate advice,³ draft a series of conditions and meet with the student to agree them. Conditions may include but are not limited to:

- Ongoing monitoring;
- Following advice from medical professionals;
- A commitment by the student to accepting learning support or other professional support;
- Academic conditions which must be met in order to prevent suspension of studies.

If conditions are agreed by the student concerned, they may normally remain in Hall accommodation except under exceptional circumstances such as the immediate safety of the student or others.

3 Level three: Formal procedure where agreement cannot be reached

If the student is not willing to agree to the conditions outlined at level 2, then the Principal shall establish a Fitness to Study and Train Group (FSTG). The student will normally be given at least 7 working days' notice of the convening of a FSTG and be informed of the purpose of the meeting, except in a case of clear emergency in the Principal's judgment. The FSTG shall consist of the Principal (who will chair), the student's FG Tutor, the Welfare Officer,⁴ and any other officer of the college whom the Principal chooses to appoint. The student is entitled to bring another member of the Wycliffe community with them to the meeting of the FSTG, as a supporter. The student should notify their FG Tutor at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting of who will accompany them.

The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that the student is made fully aware of the nature of the concerns that have been raised and the student's views are heard and taken into account. The FSTG will order its proceedings at its own discretion and advise the student beforehand of the procedure.

The FSTG will decide on a series of actions including specific recommendations in an Action Plan agreed with the student. Arrangements to ensure the student is able to study or train effectively will be specified, as will penalties for breaches of the Action Plan. The dates of any review

³ Advice may be sought from the Harassment Officer, the Principal, the Safeguarding Officer, the Disability Officer, the Senior Tutor or other officer of the Hall, as appropriate.

⁴ Or another member of the tutorial staff designated by the Welfare Officer if s/he is also the Welfare Officer.

meetings between the student and a nominated member of College staff will also be specified, to ensure that the action plan is being appropriately followed.

Possible outcomes and actions may include but are not limited to:

- formal monitoring of the student's progress for a specified period of time;
- suspension of status imposed by the Hall (which will usually also include denial of access to facilities within the Hall) for a period of time with appropriate application to the relevant University authority. This may include academic or other conditions as part of the process to return;
- expulsion;
- normally, withdrawal from Hall accommodation.

Where medical or other professional advice subsequently suggests that further action is required, the FSTG shall re-convene and agree on a further series of conditions to be implemented as part of the Action Plan. The student will meet with the Chair of the FSTG and be informed of this addition. If the student is not willing to agree to the conditions added, they may appeal as detailed below.

The decision of the FSTG, together with a concise record of the meeting, should be sent to the student within 7 working days from the date of the meeting, and a copy kept on the student's personal file. A copy of this documentation should be sent to members of the FSTG.

Appeals process

If the student does not accept the decision of the FSTG, then if they are a member of Oxford University, they may appeal to the University's Fitness to Study Panel. If the student is not a member of Oxford University, they may appeal to the Chair of Hall Council. The Chair of Hall Council (or depute) shall convene an Appeal Committee (consisting of the student's Tutor, the Chair of Council or depute and at least one other member of Hall Council), normally within two weeks of the appeal request being received. The report and the timing of the report's communication to the student shall follow the same pattern as with the report of the FSTG.

Whether a member of Oxford University or not, the student must notify the Principal of their intention to appeal within one week of the FSTG's decision being communicated to them. The Principal shall then inform the student in writing of the appeal procedure. If the Hall has suspended the student's studies, the suspension will normally continue during the appeal procedure.

The decisions made by the University's Fitness to Study Panel are final. Ordinands may appeal the decision of the Hall Council with their Diocese. In this case the Principal and Chair of the Hall Council must be informed of the appeal to the Diocese within one week of the decision from the Hall Council.

Return to study after an imposed suspension of status

Where a break in study has been agreed between the FG Tutor and the student (Level one or two), the student may return to study once they have demonstrated that any conditions have been met, without further procedure.

After a break in study which has been imposed (Level three), the student may make a request to the Hall for permission to return to the course. The student will only be permitted to return after any conditions imposed by the FSTG, the University, the Hall Council and the Diocese (as relevant) are deemed to be fulfilled by the body which imposed them.

In any case where the student returns there should be an initial meeting between the student and the student's FG Tutor to discuss what measures need to be put in place for the student's return and establish a Return to Study and Training Plan. Such measures should include a clear review pattern and written record.

If, in the case of an imposed break in study, the student is not satisfied with the decision made by the Hall with regard to his/her application to return to study and training, or with regard to the conditions imposed upon her/him in connection with that return, the student has the right to appeal, either to the FSTG or, if this procedure has already been used, the Hall Council, University or Diocese. Such appeals process will follow the appeals procedure outlined above.

VERSION CONTROL					
Version Number	Policy Gatekeeper	Date of Approval	Committee	Date to Take Effect	Date of Next Review
V 1	JRW	14.02.18	Education	14.02.18	Trinity 2020
V2	KAR	03.02.20	Education	03.02.20	Trinity 2022
V3	HLS	02.11.22	Education	02.11.22	Trinity 2024

It is the responsibility of the Gatekeeper of each policy to check annually whether there have been any legislative and/or University policy changes that are relevant to Wycliffe Hall.