



## WYCLIFFE HALL

### Student Welfare (Suspension of Status) 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 (Fitness to Study and Train) Policy' which deals with cases before the point of suspension.

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.<sup>1</sup>

#### Definitions

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:

- 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.

Note that graduate students are covered by the University's regulations, and whilst they should inform the Hall of their intention to suspend (and will be entitled to support around this), they will need to discuss suspension with their Department or Faculty in the first instance.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/field/field_document/SWSS%20Confidentiality%20Statement.pdf).

Ordinands are subject to both Church of England and University regulations, and should consult the Senior Tutor or Academic Registrar as early as possible to ensure that these regulations can be followed.

## **Welfare**

The Hall's Welfare (Fitness to Study and Train) Policy details sources of welfare support for students.

### **Scope of this Policy**

A student may feel the need to withdraw from study for a period of time for various reasons; such temporary withdrawals are called a "suspension of status". This policy details the help and support available prior to a decision to suspend being made, during the period of suspension, and immediately prior to a return to study. This policy does not cover occasions when the Hall decides it is necessary to suspend a student due to any of:

- severe concerns about their fitness to study (such occasions are covered by the Welfare (Fitness to Study and Train) Policy);
- disciplinary reasons (academic or non-academic) (covered by the Academic Discipline Policy);
- non-payment of fees.

### **Voluntary Temporary Withdrawal From Study**

If a student is considering a suspension, the natural first place of consultation is an informal and confidential discussion with their FG Tutor or Course Director. Support may include:

- 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 Service or Disability Advisory Service etc., as appropriate.

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.

If, following these discussions, the student feels they need to suspend, they should consult the Academic Registrar to begin the process. Students do not have an automatic right to suspend, though we will consider requests sympathetically. We will not grant suspension solely on the grounds that a student feels ill-prepared for examinations; that they have underperformed academically; or that they are unwilling to perform a minimum academic workload. The process of suspension will generally involve:

- medical certification, where the suspension is made for medical reasons;
- written confirmation from the Hall that a suspension has been agreed;

- written confirmation detailing any practical matters (e.g. accommodation, ongoing access to the Hall's site, contact details for the student during their suspension);
- written confirmation of any support or treatment which the student is expected to receive in order to facilitate their return;
- written confirmation of any agreed financial arrangements (e.g. refunding academic fees);
- alerting the UK Border Agency, if the student is on a Tier 4 visa.

Suspensions usually need to last a full year, to enable students to return to the same point in the annual teaching cycle. The University generally expects students to return after a year, and any suspension lasting longer than a year would require approval from the University's Education Committee. It should also be noted that most University courses have a maximum number of terms for which a student can be suspended, and this cannot be exceeded.

An undergraduate whose status is suspended will no longer be on course. The Hall is a small academic community concentrated on academic work, many of whose members are residents and whose work would be disrupted by the presence of those not on course. Additionally, the Hall is not a therapeutic community and is therefore not best placed to provide support to a student during a period of suspension. However, during the period of suspension the student shall normally be permitted the following:

- Hall accommodation on site (for those for whom this is their only home) until the end of their accommodation or tenancy agreement of the academic year in which they suspended, provided they meet all the following requirements:
  - they have not been excluded from Hall premises; AND
  - their conduct is not deemed to be a threat to the well-being of other members of the Hall; AND
  - they meet financial requirements.
- Students who do not live on site are entitled to meals within Hall if they so choose, so long as the above conditions pertain.
- Access to an agreed level of pastoral support, provided:
  - their FG Tutor or another member of staff is able and willing to offer support; AND
  - the FG tutor is confident they do not need professional help beyond the capability of the Hall's staff.
- Attendance at worship services within the conditions listed above for residence.
- Support from and contact with the Disability Officer as appropriate.
- Access to the Library.
- Access to University facilities, as determined from time to time by the University.

The Hall reserves the right to remove any of these at any point during the suspension.

Students would not normally be entitled to:

- attend any teaching sessions;

- have access to teaching materials, e.g. Canvas;
- attend Fellowship Groups.

Before the student returns to study, they will be required to demonstrate that they are adequately prepared to do so. This may include:

- meeting with their FG Tutor or another member of staff to discuss ongoing support;
- medical certification, where the suspension is made for medical reasons;
- discussion of any reasonable adjustments which might need to be made;
- evidence of funding.

### **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".<sup>2</sup>

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

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<sup>2</sup> Section 9 of

[https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/field/field\\_document/SWSS%20Confidentiality%20Statement.pdf](https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/field/field_document/SWSS%20Confidentiality%20Statement.pdf).

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,

When considering suspension of studies, ordinands will additionally need to involve their DDO as noted above; Church of England regulations will apply to training and the impact of suspension will need to be addressed.

<b>VERSION CONTROL</b>					
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Policy Gatekeeper</b>	<b>Date of Approval</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date to Take Effect</b>	<b>Date of Next Review</b>
V1	JRW	14.02.18	Education	14.02.18	Trinity 2019
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.