

exeter college



Readiness to Study Procedure

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1 Purpose

1.1 Exeter College is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for our learners; a place where all can develop their potential. We recognise that the health and wellbeing of learners is fundamental to their academic progress and acknowledge that there may be times when difficulties are such that this influences a perception of readiness to study.

1.2 The procedure is intended to be supportive. Its purpose is to:

- Promote a consistent and sensitive approach to managing concerns, with consideration of appropriate and proportionate supportive intervention, to enable learners to complete their studies wherever practicable.
- Provide a clear set of procedures which can be utilized when a learner's health, wellbeing and/or behaviour is affecting their learning, or that of others, to such an extent that progress is severely impaired.
- Clarify expectations for both staff and learners in managing such situations, with early intervention and collaborative working strongly encouraged, including the application of relevant legislation.

1.3 This procedure applies to all levels of study across the College, including both learners and applicants, wherever there is cause to believe that the commencement or continuation of study may not be in the interests of the individual or the College community. It is not intended to replace support & conduct procedures or to address concerns, outside of the context of health and wellbeing.

2 Definitions

2.1 The term 'readiness to study' within this context applies to the entire learner experience and is not solely restricted to a learner's ability to engage with their academic studies.

2.2 Exeter College would consider a learner to be 'ready to study' if they can demonstrate the following standards:

- **Suitable awareness of their own health, safety and wellbeing** – to an extent that they do not present with a risk of harm to themselves or others.
- **The ability to meaningfully engage in their learning** – including maintaining a good level of physical attendance and participation in classes, timely completion of academic work and appropriate interaction with peers and staff.

3 Procedure

3.1 Disclosure of health and wellbeing needs

To ensure that learners' health and wellbeing needs are recognised and understood, all learners on full time courses are asked to complete a Health and Wellbeing Form. It is particularly important to include any difficulties that may impact safety or engagement. The College requests that such disclosures are made early wherever possible, at the point of application, for example, to ensure that learners are enrolled onto the most suitable course from the outset. The College accepts that the state of health and wellbeing is variable and it will remain the learner's responsibility to notify the College of any changes to their health or requirements for support, in accordance with our [Supporting Learners with Health Needs Policy](#).

3.2 Scope of support

Learners experiencing health or wellbeing challenges will be directed to Student Services. The College has a nurse, wellbeing advisors, a daily wellbeing drop-in service and a small trainee counselling provision. Referrals to and liaison with specialist external agencies can also be undertaken, with a learner's consent. The learner's willingness to engage is critical to the success of this intervention and we are somewhat reliant on pro-active help-seeking. Learners are expected to be largely independent throughout the day, mobilising freely around our sites. The College does not have a comprehensive healthcare provision and as such we are unlikely to be able to accommodate requests for a high level of supervision or health intervention.

The College will seek to implement reasonable adjustments wherever possible, as required under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, in order to reduce the potential for disadvantage or discrimination. If specific learning needs are identified, learners will be referred for short-term support to assist with study skills. If needs are believed to exceed the scope of the College's universal support offer, the College may recommend an application for a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is pursued through the local authority (subject to age restrictions).

The College offer does not incorporate extended periods of remote working or individualised learning programmes and will be unable to meet desired outcomes for learners for whom this is required.

3.3 Indicators of concern

The Readiness to Study Procedure can be initiated where there is significant concern about a learner's capacity to fully engage with their academic studies, without unreasonable detriment to the health or wellbeing of themselves or others and whilst maintaining appropriate standards of behaviour. Examples of appropriate reasons for application of the procedure include:

- A learner poses a risk to their own health, safety and/or that of others.
- A learner's behaviours are at risk of disrupting the teaching, learning and/or experience of others.
- A learner's behaviour results in unreasonable demands being placed on staff or other learners.

A learner's readiness to study may be brought into question as a result of a wide range of circumstances, including:

- Disclosure of information from the learner.
- Observations by staff of sustained unacceptable performance or behaviour, thought to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health difficulty.
- Serious concerns emerging from a third party.

3.4 Actions to address concerns

Concerns should be addressed with consistency and sensitivity, as set out in this Readiness to Study Procedure. This must be with openness and transparency, with the learner's inclusion integral to the process.

The Readiness to Study Procedure comprises two levels, depending on the severity of the perceived risk:

- The first level is an informal stage**, whereby an appropriate member of staff (such as the tutor) will address concerns with the learner directly, making it clear that this forms part of The Readiness to Study Procedure, with signposting to support and the setting of actionable targets. A realistic timeframe will be set for review.
- The second level is a formal stage**, usually triggered in response to sustained concerns where agreed actions have not been met, or where concerns are serious enough to require this escalation. At this stage, the College will collaborate with the learner, Next of Kin and any relevant external agencies to take account of extenuating circumstances and, where possible, to determine an anticipated likelihood of and timescale for improvement that would facilitate suitable engagement. Evidence may be sought from relevant health professionals or supporting agencies, following receipt of consent from the learner, to contribute to robust assessment of readiness to study.

This formal stage will usually involve a meeting with the Head of Faculty and engagement with the most appropriate support department – most likely the College nurse or Wellbeing Team. The College will consider needs fully when organising meetings to address concerns, with the intention of maximising opportunities for the learner to engage in the process. Evidence of the meeting and discussion will be shared with the learner and next of kin (where appropriate), with a 7-day window in which to dispute accuracy.

3.5 Outcomes

Decisions relating to readiness to study will not be taken lightly and no learner can be withdrawn from the College without prior consultation. The final decision will rest with the relevant Assistant Principle or Head of Faculty.

Assessments of readiness to study will observe a robust process, with two potential outcomes:

- A decision to enable continuation of study
- A decision to interrupt or discontinue study

3.6 Continuation of study

If it is deemed suitable for a learner to remain on their chosen academic programme, the College will consider what adjustments or support may be required to sustain this. This may include enhanced support for a set period of time. Continuing close monitoring by the learner's tutor will be helpful in ensuring satisfactory progress is maintained.

3.7 Interruption to or discontinuation of study

If a learner's physical or mental health challenges are such that they are not able to maintain satisfactory progress on their chosen academic programme, despite support, a decision to withdraw is likely.

For some learners, acceptance that they are not well enough to continue with their studies can be disappointing. Wherever possible, the College will set out opportunities to re-engage with studies, after a period of time to focus on their health and wellbeing. This may include a recommendation to apply to recommence their studies within the following academic year, with the break in studies deemed an 'interruption' and opportunities to engage with meaningful employment or skills explored in the interim. Learners may later make a new application, with evidence of progress shown at interview (see 3.9 Returning to study).

3.8 Maintaining focus

We acknowledge the importance of a sense of purpose within a learner's recovery. As part of discussions around readiness to study, the College may recommend that learners engage with non-academic short-term outreach courses as an alternative to full-time study. These courses are intended to assist learners to develop confidence and skills to return to education or to enter employment.

In advance of a decision to withdraw, staff will advise about potential progression routes, to assist the learner in determining their direction. This may require referral to the College's Future Steps Team, for more comprehensive careers guidance.

3.9 Returning to study

The return to study procedure will be initiated for learners returning to their studies following:

- Previous withdrawal on the grounds of readiness to study (within the preceding 12-month period).
- A significant health episode or period of hospitalisation that has resulted in an interruption to learning or presented an acute safety risk.

Prior to the re-commencement of studies, a health and wellbeing assessment will be undertaken by the College nurse or wellbeing/safeguarding teams, in order to ensure robust consideration of their safety and suitability to return. Learners may be asked to provide evidence to support their assertion that they have overcome the original difficulties and are well enough to resume their studies. The College may seek a professional's opinion with regard to the potential impact returning to study may have, to ensure it is in the learner's best interests to do so. The outcome of this assessment will be reported to the relevant Head of Faculty and/or course tutor, contributing to a decision about suitability to return.

3.10 Appeals

If the outcome of the readiness to study assessment is not deemed mutually agreeable, learners are entitled to appeal within 14 days of being notified of the outcome. This appeal must be lodged in writing, with the person who has communicated the decision. The appeal should contain information relating to the following:

- Evidence of procedural irregularities or bias.

- New information or material evidence relating to the learner’s circumstance, health or wellbeing, sufficient to influence the basis of the original decision.

Following receipt of appeal, a panel will convene to review the evidence and opinions of relevant parties. A response will be given within 14 days of the receipt of appeal.

4 Implementation

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1.1 Staff

Staff will have knowledge of this procedure and implement the accompanying procedure appropriately, please refer also to the flowchart on page 6.

4.1.2 Learners

Learners should provide accurate information about their health needs and take a leading role in the discussions regarding their support and progress.

4.1.3 Next of Kin

Learner’s Next of Kin may be required to provide sufficient and up-to-date knowledge regarding health needs, particularly when a learner is unable to do so.

4.2 External agencies

Where appropriate external agencies should provide notification of learner’s health needs, including contribution of evidence to be considered in assessments of readiness to study, following receipt of fully informed consent.

5 Associated Documentation

5.1 [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)

5.2 [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

5.3 [Data Protection Policy](#)

5.4 [Health and Safety Policy](#)

5.5 [Positive Intervention and Misconduct procedures](#)

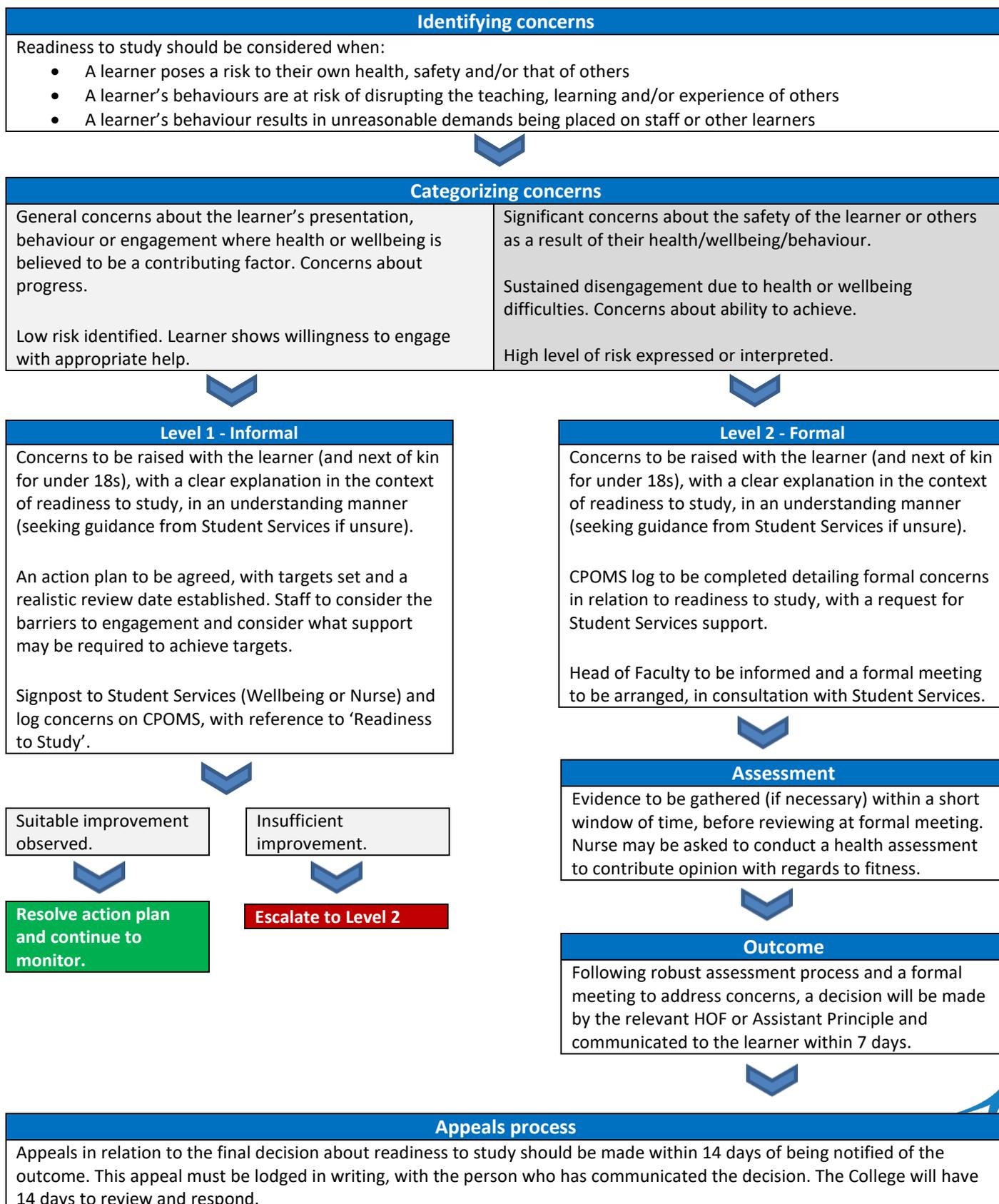
5.6 [Ofsted Common Inspection Framework, 2015](#)

5.7 [Supporting learners with Health Needs Policy](#)

5.8 [Education \(School Premises\) Regulations 1996](#)

5.9 [The Equality Act 2010](#)

If there are significant or sustained concerns in relation to a learner's readiness to study, consider initiating this procedure, with the support of the relevant Head of Faculty. Please refer to the [Readiness to Study Procedure](#).



Return to Study Flowchart

The majority of short-term absences relating to health will not require the implementation of this procedure; with learners expected to resume their studies following suitable recovery. This procedure should be followed if there are significant concerns about the impact of a health-related absence or event upon a learner’s safety or ability to engage with their studies.

Identifying concerns

Concerns may arise from a variety of sources and could include:

- A significant health absence, where there are concerns or insufficient understanding about the continuing impact of health needs.
- A significant health episode requiring consideration of safety (including attempts to end life or cause severe harm).



Logging concerns

Staff should log their concerns and relevant detail surrounding their interaction with the learner on CPOMS. Staff should observe good safeguarding principles, including:

- Reporting as soon as possible after disclosure.
- Including factual information only.
- Informing the learner that information will be shared with the safeguarding team in order to ensure appropriate consideration of safety and support.



Arranging assessment

As assessment of a learner’s safety and suitability to return to study can be requested through Student Services. This process may be automatically triggered by the CPOMS referral, but staff can request updates if they perceive that no action has been taken, or if there is a narrow window between reporting and intended return.

Wellbeing / Safeguarding concerns	Health concerns
<p>If concerns relate to wellbeing issues or a safeguarding concern, staff should request that students are seen by a member of the Wellbeing or Safeguarding teams prior to or as soon as possible after the return to College.</p> <p>studentservices@exe-coll.ac.uk 01392 400449 8.30-4.30pm weekdays</p>	<p>If concerns relate solely to health, or there are high level wellbeing concerns, staff should request that learners are assessed by the College nurse prior to resuming their studies.</p> <p>studentservices@exe-coll.ac.uk 01392 400484 8.30am-4.30pm weekdays during term-time.</p>



Communicating outcomes

The outcome of assessments will be communicated with the tutor and teachers/HOF/DHOF as appropriate. This will take into consideration the extent to which the learner feels comfortable to communicate personal or health issues and will be subject to their consent. Where a learner has not consented to information being shared, or not engaged in the assessment process this will be made clear and decisions to return to study will need to be made in the absence of this information, based on that which is already available.



Continuing monitoring

The Wellbeing/Safeguarding Teams or College nurse may arrange subsequent follow up with the learner, however, this will not be on a continuing basis. The Tutor will be tasked with continuing monitoring of attendance and engagement, with the provision of regular 1:1s likely to facilitate more open conversation surrounding any contributing external or health factors. The tutor should continue to log concerns on CPOMS to build an accurate chronology, with requests for further safeguarding/health input made where necessary.



Health and wellbeing assessment contributing to readiness to study

Learner name	
Reference number	
Staff name	
Staff position	

Presenting difficulties and relevant history, including any associated behaviours and their impact upon education

Current or planned medical treatment or supportive intervention

Observations during assessment					
Speech		Presentation		Behaviour	
Mood		Insight		Concentration	
Motivation		Sleep		Appetite	
PHQ-9 Score		GAD-7 Score			

Comments:

Consideration of risk, including onsite safety

Recommendations for support or adjustments to facilitate continuation of studies

Opinion on readiness to study

Staff signature	
Date	



Information contributing to the assessment of readiness to study

External professionals

Professional's name and role in relation to the learner	
Business address and contact information	

Please indicate the context and duration of your involvement with the learner <i>This will help the College to determine the relevance of the information submitted in the context of readiness to study.</i>

Please provide your perception of the learner's readiness to engage with their studies at this time <i>This is expected to be an opinion based on your interaction with the learner and in accordance with their best interests.</i>

Do you believe there to be any risks surrounding the learner, either to themselves or others? <i>Please provide details relevant to the College environment. Please note that learners are unsupervised for significant periods of time.</i>			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Detail:

Please provide information relating to plans for continuing support or further intervention <i>This will help us to consider the potential for difficulties to improve, and the likely timescale for this.</i>

Please detail any support you believe this learner would need to continue their studies <i>Whilst the College cannot guarantee to accommodate all requests, we will endeavour to support as fully as possible within the scope of our service.</i>

Signature	
Date	