

Support to Study Procedures

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1. Overview

1.1. The University is committed to supporting student's wellbeing and seeks to ensure the Support to Study policy and associated procedures are supportive ones with the aim of achieving the best outcome for students.

2. Purpose and Scope

2.1. This document is linked to the Support to Study policy.

2.2. This document aims to ensure the Support to Study process are accurately and consistently completed with an emphasis placed upon ensuring students receive timely and accurate information.

3. Referring a Concern

3.1. Concerns for a student's wellbeing will first be raised with Student Support Services through the concerned@inbox.

3.2. These concerns may arise from the below stakeholders:

3.2.1. Raised by the academic department.

3.2.2. Raised by University staff.

3.2.3. Raised by peers.

3.2.4. Raised by self-disclosure from student.

3.3. These concerns will be triaged and if deemed appropriate, will be referred to the Cause for Concern group to consider necessary action and decide on the stage of the policy to enact.

3.4. Where there are significant concerns for a student, this will be escalated to the Head of Student Support Services or appointed deputy who will determine if Stage 3 needs to be enacted.

4. Support

4.1. Throughout all stages of the process, support will be coordinated through the Cause for Concern group for students. This includes monitoring how a student is engaging in this support and taking necessary action where there is evidence of disengagement.

4.2. Students may be accompanied to meetings by a member of the University. This includes both support meetings and the formal Support to Study panel. Prior agreement on this individual's attendance must be sought from the Head of Student Support Services.

4.3. Reasonable adjustments to this procedure will be made in line with the Equality Act 2010 for disabled students or those with additional needs or to allow for other factors that would otherwise place a student at a disadvantage.

4.4. If the University and student agree, any meetings may be held by video conferencing, Skype, telephone conferencing or other appropriate means. In exceptional situations, for example, where verbal discussions would be impractical, and both parties agree, these discussions may be in writing.

- 4.5. For all international students who hold a visa, staff dealing with the concern must liaise with the Student Immigration Compliance Advice team to ensure the student is supported in a holistic manner.
- 4.6. The Cause for Concerns group may consider protective measures if deemed appropriate. This may include placing a divert on student's emails, temporary suspensions and no-contact orders.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1. Where concerns are raised by University staff, they should record consent at the point of student disclosure or at least a record of how such consent was provided and when, so that the University would be able to demonstrate that the student had specifically agreed to the processing of his or her sensitive personal data in particular ways.
- 5.2. Once consent has been obtained and a record made, it is the responsibility of the person passing on sensitive information to ensure it is done in accordance with the student's explicit wishes. Transfer of such information should also be carried out in an appropriate secure manner to reduce the risk of inadvertent disclosure to unauthorised persons. This includes anyone within the University who does not need this information to administer support to the student.
- 5.3. If the student chooses not to provide explicit consent to share their special category data or chooses to withdraw consent, this decision should be respected in most instances. In this scenario, the implications of not sharing in terms of additional support available from, for example the University's Student Support Services or other parts of the University with a need to know all or some part of such information to provide support, should be made clear.
- 5.4. However, there are exceptional circumstances when the student's consent is withheld, or it is impracticable to try to obtain it, when confidentiality may lawfully be broken, and disclosure can be made to Support Services, processes relating to professional regulated courses and/or to external agencies. These include:
 - 5.4.1. When the student's health has deteriorated to the extent of threatening their personal safety or that of others.
 - 5.4.2. When the student is at risk of serious abuse or exploitation.
 - 5.4.3. When the student's behaviour is adversely affecting the rights and safety of others.
 - 5.4.4. Where the member of staff would be liable to civil or criminal procedure if the information were not disclosed (e.g., if a crime had been committed)
 - 5.4.5. Where the student is either under 18 years or a vulnerable adult (see [University Safeguarding Policy](#))
- 5.5. In extreme circumstances, in the student's 'vital interests' and where the University has justifiable concerns for the safety and/or life of the student, the University will disclose information as required.
- 5.6. Where there is no immediate risk, staff should first consult with IAS and Student Support Services if they believe there is a need to break the commitment to confidentiality. Initial discussion should not identify the student until the grounds for breaking confidentiality have been established and agreed upon.

6. Stage 1: Informal Case Review

- 6.1. An Informal Case Review is likely to take place where a student's behaviour or wellbeing has raised cause for concern. It is intended that this is a collaborative and informal approach to find ways to work together in moving forward and should be seen as the start of a process to re-engage the student.

- 6.2. The Cause for Concern group will identify and coordinate the support needed for the student based on the information provided. At this initial stage, the group may request further information from the referee to ensure all decisions made are informed ones.
- 6.3. Where it is suspected that a student's behaviour is related to a mental health problem, the Student Wellbeing Service will make contact and provide support in accessing the service. The student should be encouraged to access help through their GP or Student Wellbeing Services, whichever is the most appropriate.
- 6.4. A student would not be directly involved with decision making at this stage however, once the appropriate support has been identified, a student would always be encouraged to be involved with the appropriate team to ensure we are able to provide the best possible support.

7. Stage 2: Formal Case Review

- 7.1. The Formal Case Review is likely to take place where a student poses a risk to their own wellbeing or that of others or there is a failure to resolve the situation at the informal stage and the student has not improved or engaged. A collaborative approach to find ways to move forward will be the primary objective with the student's wellbeing at the core of the process.
- 7.2. This stage may entail the Cause for Concern group convening for an exceptional meeting to coordinate appropriate action.
- 7.3. At this stage it should be formally recorded by Student Support Services as a Support to Study review and the student's options discussed; for example, seeking support, reasonable adjustments if appropriate, self-suspend, financial considerations.
- 7.4. The Formal Case Review will be managed centrally by Student Support Services. Student Support Services will keep a record of all referrals, actions and developments in the case and relevant colleagues will be updated where necessary. Where it is necessary to seek the intervention of a student's GP and/or mental health services, this will be done by Student Support Services staff.
- 7.5. At this stage, it may become apparent that the student requires more support than can be offered by University services. If this is the case, a decision will be made at the meeting as to whether the student's emergency contact should be informed.
- 7.6. Where appropriate, there will be contact with Residential Life Services, particularly if the student, or others living close to the student, may need to be moved to alternative accommodation.

8. Stage 3: Exceptional Case Review

- 8.1. The Exceptional Case Review can be only be enacted by the Head of Student Support Services or nominated deputy.
- 8.2. The Exceptional Case Review is likely to take place when a student's behaviour is causing significant concern as to their own safety and wellbeing, and may be affecting the teaching, learning or experience of other students or is negatively affecting the day-to-day activities of the University.

- 8.3. A Support to Study panel will be convened by the Head of Student Support Services who will also act as Chair and decide the panel membership. Attendees will be kept to the minimum to minimise the stress for the student when attending.
- 8.4. A School representative and the student will normally attend the meeting and other relevant parties may also be involved. Student Support Services will maintain a record of all referrals, actions and developments in the case and relevant colleagues will be updated where necessary.
- 8.5. In the event that a student does not attend the Support to Study panel and has not notified the secretary in advance, the Chair will determine whether on the basis of the information available to it, if the Panel can proceed and reach a decision the student's absence, or whether the Panel should adjourn.
- 8.6. There may be exceptional circumstances, e.g., when the student is in hospital or unable to attend due to illness, such that the panel meeting will take place without the student in order to ensure that their situation has been reviewed and Support Services are aware of the student to enable the University to identify the next appropriate steps.
- 8.7. The panel will discuss various options with the student, including additional support strategies, review of progress, alternative accommodation, suspension or exclusion. A recommendation will be made to the Academic Registrar by the Chair on whether the student should suspend from their studies at the University whilst appropriate means of addressing the situation are being considered.
- 8.8. The agreed course of action will be communicated in writing to the student within 5 working days of the agreement being made by the panel. A joint support action plan will be drawn up as part of this meeting for regular review by Student Support Services, the School and the student. The meeting will be minuted by a member of Student Support Services and a copy of the minutes will be sent to all parties along with an outcome letter and copy of the support action plan.
- 8.9. If suspension from studies is recommended, the student will usually be directed to request suspension themselves. The usual steps for suspension should then be carried out by the relevant teams. The consideration of the duration of any suspension will include the most appropriate time for the student to return to study, the altered structure of the programme of study and the ability of the Student Support Services to effectively support the student.
- 8.10. It is hoped that the student will reach the conclusion that suspending is the best option. However, the University retains the right to compel them to do so if necessary.
- 8.11. Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to contact the student's emergency contact to ask them to attend or support the student in suspending. The student would always be advised that this action is taking place, to ensure that if their circumstances have changed, they can request an alternative contact is made aware.
- 8.12. Where the student's emergency contact is not able or willing to be involved in the practical arrangements, the student's School, in conjunction with University Support Services, will endeavour to provide a reasonable level of support for these tasks. If there are concerns regarding the safety of the student, referral to external agencies must be considered.

9. Return to Study

- 9.1. There is an expectation that whilst suspended the student will stay in contact with the University regarding their return to study. A School point of contact and a member of Student Support Services will be listed in the joint support action plan.
- 9.2. Return to Study applies when a student takes steps to return from a period of suspension or exclusion. As a result of any formal part of this process, a returning student will be required to attend a Return to Study Panel.
- 9.3. The Panel will include representation from the School and other key members of staff.
- 9.4. The Panel will lead a review of the documentary evidence of the student's wellbeing and contextualise with the demands of the course and decide whether the student is able to return to their studies at that time. The student and the School will be informed of the outcome and potential return to study date. A Return to Study Action plan will be developed with all relevant parties and reviewed at regular intervals following return to study.

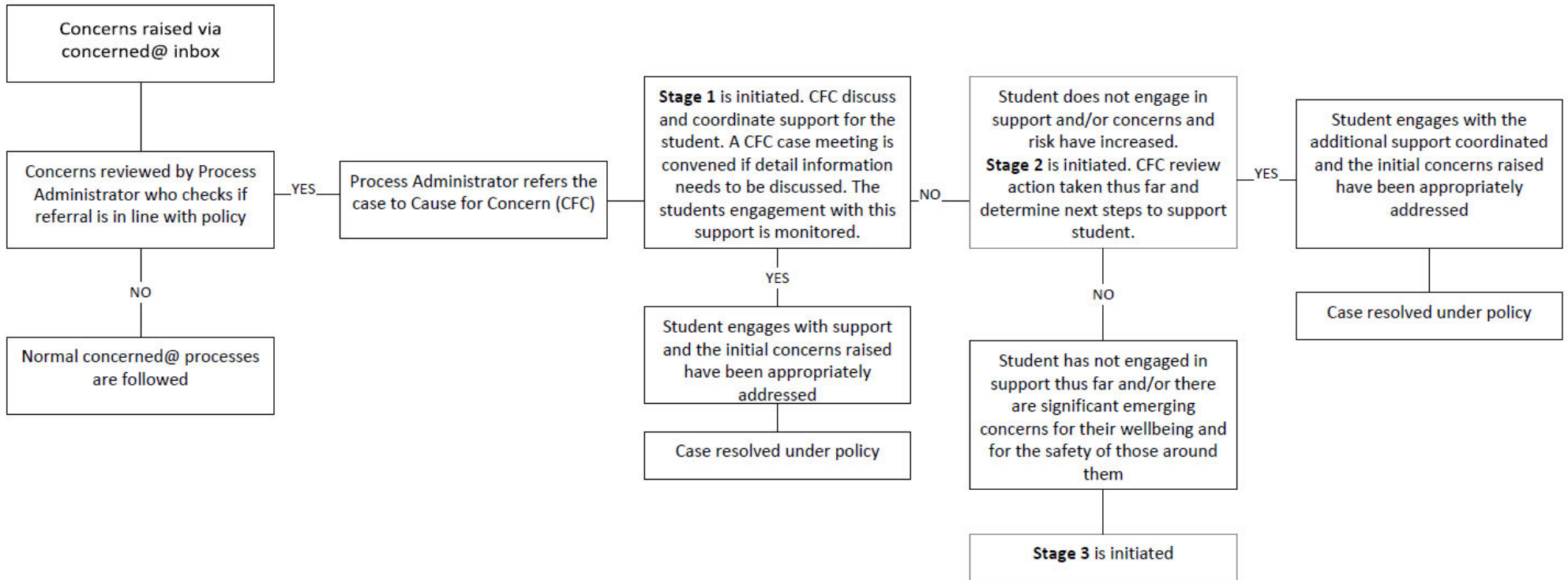
10. Appeals Procedure

- 10.1. Providing a student has grounds, they may appeal against a decision made under the Support to Study policy.
- 10.2. Students wishing to appeal should do so in writing to the of Chair of the Support to Study review panel within 10 working days of receiving the Support to Study Review Panel decision letter. The letter must clearly state their grounds for appeal, the outcome they are seeking and include any relevant evidence.
- 10.3. The student's appeal will be passed to the Academic Registrar who will appoint a Panel Coordinator. The Panel Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the processes are correctly followed, and appropriate records kept.
- 10.4. The Panel Coordinator will confirm receipt of the appeal letter within 5 working days; the communication will recommend that the student consult the Students' Union Advice Centre for advice throughout the appeals procedure and should also include a copy of the Support to Study policy.
- 10.5. The Appeals Panel must hear the appeal within 14 working days of receiving the student's letter; the Appeals Panel will be chaired by an independent member of the Student Services' management team. The Director of Learning and Teaching from the School (or their nominee) will also be involved.
- 10.6. Once a date has been set for the appeal, the Panel Coordinator will send copies of the Support to Study policy to all parties and confirm the date, time and the panel members in writing to the student.
- 10.7. The student must also be advised that they can come alone or with representatives from the University, Students' Union and/or external health/medical support or Student Support Services. All documentation from the Support to Study Review (including the Appeal itself) must be sent to all parties no less than 5 working days before the date of the panel meeting.

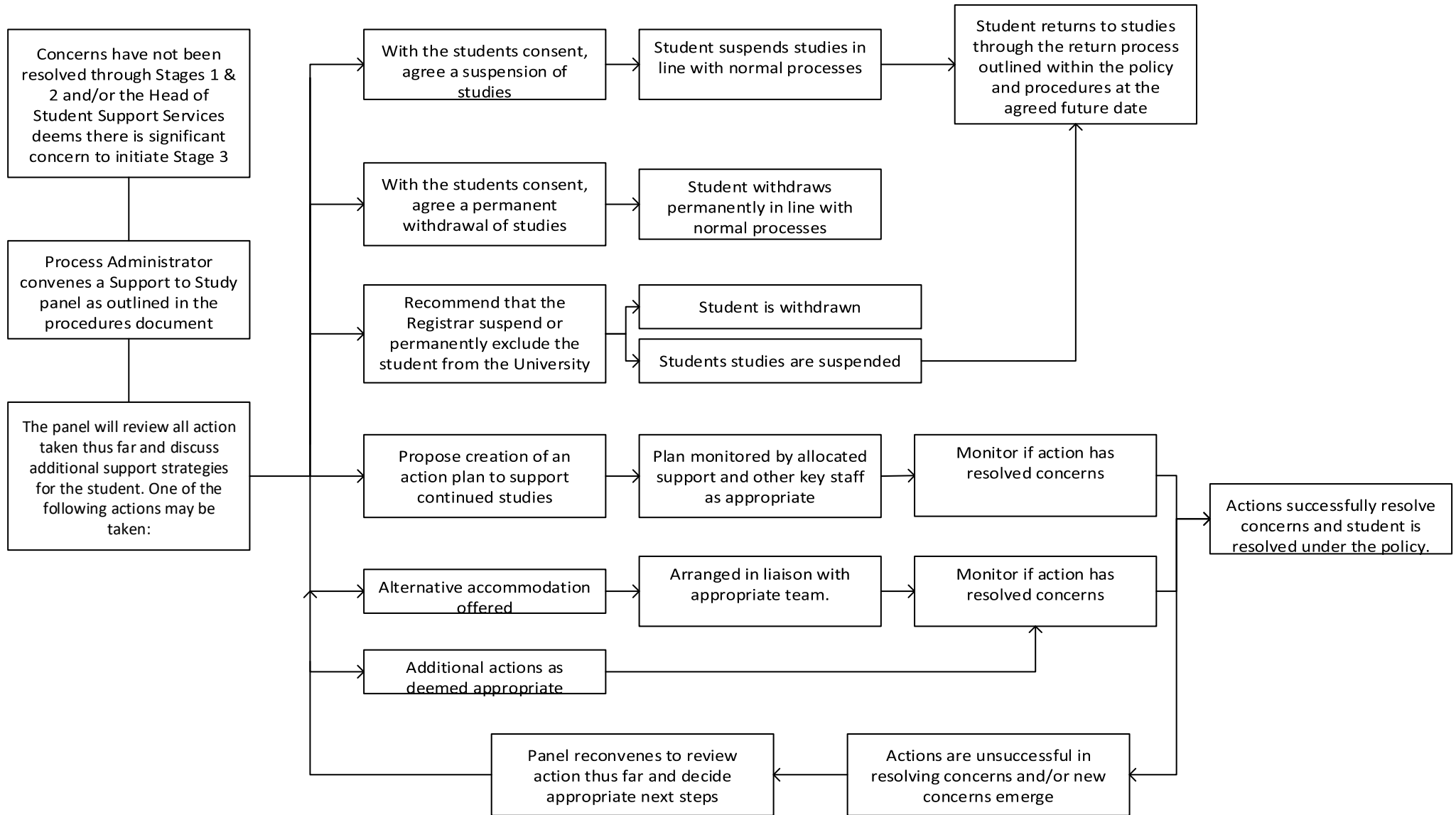
- 10.8. Prior agreement from the Head of Student Support Services must be sought if a student wishes to be accompanied by someone who is neither a member of the University nor a Students' Union advisor.
- 10.9. If the student is unable to attend the Appeal meeting, the Appeals Panel reserve the right to proceed in the student's absence. However, if the student provides valid reasons in advance for being unable to attend, consideration should be given to rescheduling the meeting.
- 10.10 At the meeting, the Appeals Panel may:
- 10.9.1. Uphold the student's case and agree to implement the outcome the student is seeking.
 - 10.9.2. Uphold the student's case but offer an alternative outcome.
 - 10.9.3. Uphold the original decision.
- 10.10.A written report of the panel's decision will be sent to the Appeals Panel, student and Academic Registrar within 5 working days of the meeting.
- 10.11. A Completion of Procedures letter signifies to the student that the University's internal procedure for the Support to Study process has been completed and should be sent to the student normally within 28 days of the University's final decision being made. The letter will provide information about bringing a complaint to the OIA.
- 10.12. Students wishing to submit a complaint to the OIA must do so within the timeframe set down in the Rules of the Student Complaints Scheme which is normally 12 months from the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. A complaint must be made in writing using the Scheme Application Form.

Appendix A: Flowchart of Support to Study stages

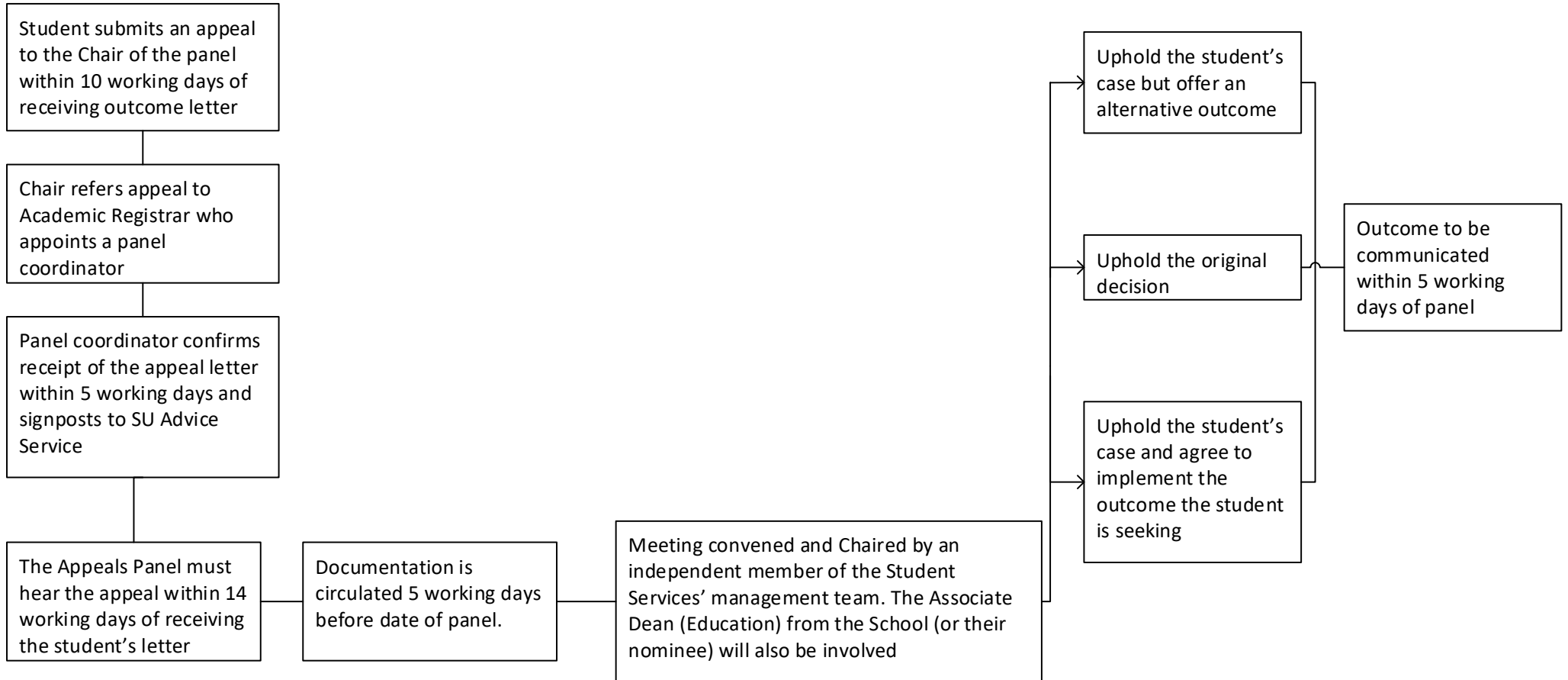
Support to Study Stages 1 & 2



Support to Study Stage 3



Support to Study Appeals



Appendix B: Support Action Plan template

Student name:	Student number:	Course title:
Plan completed by:	Date of meeting/panel:	Key staff contact for student:
Date plan sent to student:		

Summary of the nature of concerns and support required, as discussed in liaison with the student where possible:

Support Action Plan

Action	Theme	Owner	Completion/Review date

**Theme: this may be one of the following: academic, engagement in external or internal support services, engagement with GP etc.*

Student name:	Student signature:	Date:
Staff name:	Staff signature:	Date:
Date of next meeting:		

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Support Action Plan

An Action Plan seeks to be a supportive measure that sets out specific actions and timescales which students can utilise to support the continuation of their studies.

Through collaborative working, agreements with the student will be made that in their best interest they will need to satisfy particular academic requirements or engage with particular types of support. The Action Plan will be reviewed at a specified date and discussions will also identify the consequent actions if the plan is not followed.

The plan will clearly identify key support and academic contacts for the student.

Cause for Concern

The Cause for Concern group is the operational group of University services which meets regularly to ensure high level student cases are appropriately managed, coordinated and risk assessed. The group seeks to ensure all action taken is in the best interest of the student and places their wellbeing and that of others as the focus of their work.

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments to the processes within the policy and associated procedures, including the extending of deadlines for student responses, will be made upon the production by the student of relevant third party evidence which demonstrates the need for those adjustments.

Support to Study

The University defines Support to Study as a student's ability to engage with their programme of study, with reasonable adjustments where necessary, in accordance with the expectations set out in the University's Regulations. A student's engagement should not impact negatively on their safety or wellbeing or that of others and should offer full opportunity to meet the learning outcomes of their programme.