



**Kingston University  
Wellness to Study -  
Compulsory Study Break and Withdrawal Procedure**

**Student Services  
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**Approved by: Student Life Committee**

## **Wellness to Study - Compulsory Study Break/Withdrawal Procedure**

Whenever possible the University will provide support and make reasonable adjustments for students to enable them to remain on their programme of study. However, there may be circumstances when it is necessary to place a student on a compulsory study break/withdrawal such as:

- Where a student's behaviour gives cause for significant concern regarding their mental health and wellbeing;
- Where it is believed either that there is an underlying physical or mental health condition that is actively impairing their ability to engage productively in their academic studies and/or university life in general, and where reasonable adjustments have been made as far as is possible;
- Where a student regularly submits mitigating circumstances claims as a result of health and/or wellbeing concerns;
- Where a student has themselves raised their own concerns about their ability to study due to health and/or wellbeing concerns;
- Where a student's behaviours are causing significant, ongoing disruption or risk to the University experience of other students and/or staff members, notwithstanding that the student's academic work or progress may not be significantly adversely affected;
- Where a student has received support from the University and has had engagement with mitigating circumstance and appeal processes, but continues not to engage as a result of the condition or demonstrates that they are at risk of continued failure;
- Where the use of the Student Conduct and Behaviour Procedure and/or Faculty or School specific Fitness to Practise procedures would be inappropriate to address concerns.

In cases where support provision to enable a student to remain engaged with their studies have been exhausted and it is considered that a compulsory study break or withdrawal may be required, this will need to be considered by a Student Wellbeing Panel. The panel will usually be convened on an open basis with the student, who will have the opportunity to make representations.

### **Student Wellbeing Panel**

The Student Wellbeing Panel will be chaired by the Associate Director of Student Life, Health and Wellbeing. The panel will assess the case and consider the need for further actions to support the student's ongoing engagement with their studies and wider University experience. This panel should normally include the following members (or a nominee):

- Associate Director of Student Life, Health and Wellbeing or Student Services Director (Chair)
- Deputy Academic Registrar (Regulations, Assessment & Student Casework)
- Course Leader, Personal Tutor and/or Head of Department

At the discretion of the Chair and where available, other members of staff involved with the case can be invited to join the panel (e.g. Safeguarding, Mental Health/Disability and Wellbeing staff).

Based on the case presented, the Student Wellbeing panel can take any of the following actions:

- Dismiss the case and take no further action
- Require further medical evidence before making a decision
- Require the creation & implementation of a support plan to support continued studies
- Recommend that the student be transferred to a different mode of study
- Recommend that the Executive Director for Students (or a nominee) places the student on a compulsory study break

- Recommend that the Executive Director for Students (or a nominee) permanently withdraws the student from the university
- Take any other action that the panel considers to be appropriate and proportionate

Where it is concluded that a student must be placed on a compulsory study break, that student will not participate in University activities and may either be prohibited from entering the University grounds or have restricted rights to enter University grounds. The terms of the compulsory study break will, as far as possible and if appropriate, be communicated to the student verbally, as well as being communicated in writing. The recommended period of the compulsory study break may vary depending on the individual circumstances of the case as considered by the Student Wellbeing Panel. Students returning from a compulsory study break must satisfy the Return to Study criteria as outlined below.

Where it is concluded that a student must be permanently withdrawn from the University, that student will be prohibited from participating in University activities and from entering the University grounds. The exclusion will, as far as possible and if appropriate, be communicated to the student verbally, as well as being communicated in writing.

The recommendation to permanently withdraw a student from the University should only be made in the most serious cases, where there is clear evidence, and where it is felt that there is no reasonable prospect of the student appropriately re-engaging with their programme in the short to medium term or within the completion of studies timeframes set out within the Academic Regulations.

### **Return to study of a student on a compulsory study break**

When the student is informed of the decision to place them on a compulsory study break, the student should be advised verbally (where possible & appropriate) and in writing of the process to request a return to study.

The following steps should be taken when a student is requesting a return to study following a compulsory study break:

- a) Student Wellbeing will ensure the appropriate faculty is notified, and contact the student to explain the support available, the process for returning, and to request the student's permission to liaise with the relevant qualified medical professional to gain the following:
  - An assessment of the student's current health and advice on whether a return to study may be detrimental to their wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others;
  - Written confirmation advising whether a return to study is recommended.

In some instances, additional information may be requested if it is felt the student may have special support requirements or if there is another reason for concern.

- b) The student may be invited to attend a meeting with relevant staff from Student Life, Health and Wellbeing in order to:
  - Discuss with the student their current health and wellbeing;
  - Discuss any previous concerns and identify strategies to prevent their reoccurrence;
  - Identify any potential adjustments and support requirements.

The student may be accompanied by a friend, family member, or officer or staff member from the Union of Kingston Students provided this is agreed in advance and they are not attending in any legal capacity.

- c) A Student Wellbeing Panel (membership as above) will make a decision about the suitability of the student's return to study and advise the student accordingly.

At this point the Faculty will be responsible for initiating the Fitness to Practise procedure where appropriate.

Faculty consultation is essential in circumstances where a student is due to return part way through the academic year to give consideration to missed work and assessments. The Student Wellbeing Panel will consider advice from the student's Personal Tutor, Course Leader and/or Head of Department and Academic Registry to ensure these issues are addressed as soon as possible to facilitate an effective return. In cases where a student has been on a compulsory study break for a significant portion of the academic year the faculty may wish to recommend a further period of a voluntary temporary break to enable the student to return at the beginning of an academic year and/or teaching block. However, this recommendation is nonbinding. In instances where the faculty recommendation and student's wishes conflict, the matter can be referred to the Executive Director for Students (or a nominee) to reach a final decision on the student's return.

In circumstances where a student has voluntarily taken a study break from their course of study on health and/or wellbeing grounds and wishes to return following a period of recuperation, medical evidence of suitability to study may still be required.

### **Complaints / Appeals procedure**

On receiving the final outcome of the Student Wellbeing Panel the student may submit an appeal on one or more of the following grounds:

- The University's Procedures have not been followed and this has affected the outcome;
- Based on the evidence available at the time, the outcome is unreasonable;
- There is new evidence which the student was unable to provide earlier in the process, for valid and evidenced reasons, and this has affected the outcome.

The appeal must be put in writing and submitted, along with any supporting information, within five university working days of the outcome letter date. The appeal should be submitted to [academicregistry@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:academicregistry@kingston.ac.uk).

Appeals which do not meet the grounds listed above, or are submitted late and do not provide compelling exceptional reasons, will not be considered. Academic Registry will let you know if this is the case and will provide you with a Completion of Procedures Letter which will allow you to take your case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Another member of the Senior Leadership Group, with no prior involvement in your case, will consider your appeal and provide you with an outcome in writing within 10 university working days of its receipt. If your appeal is upheld, the reviewer may recommend that the Panel is reconvened in order to reconsider the evidence, or they may overturn the original decision and replace this with their own decision. The outcome of the appeal is final. Whilst an appeal is being considered, the outcome of the Panel will stay in place.