

# Student Suspension Policy

Approved by Senate 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017

## STUDENT SUSPENSION POLICY

### 1. SCOPE

- 1.1 Suspension of a student may occur for a variety of reasons; at the student's request or as a consequence of another University policy, such as the Attendance Policy, Supported Study Policy, the Fitness to Practise Policy and/or the Student Non-Academic Conduct and Disciplinary Policy. The Suspension Policy is intended to complement rather than replace these policies by outlining what access students may have to University resources once a decision to suspend them has taken place. It also sets baseline expectations for assisting students to return to their studies.

### 2. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

- 2.1 During the period of their suspension, students will normally have full access to University email and electronic learning resources, such as Moodle. However, a procedure followed as part of another University policy, such as the Student Non-Academic Conduct and Disciplinary Policy, may determine that access may be inappropriate in the circumstances and should be restricted. The reasons for this should be explained clearly to the student and should be proportionate to the case.

#### **Case Study 1**

*A student is accused of harassing a fellow student in person and via University email and social media. The case is considered under the Student Non-Academic Conduct and Disciplinary Policy. It is agreed that, whilst this is investigated, the student should be suspended and their access to University email should be temporarily blocked. Note that blocking access to email is not automatically undertaken when a student is suspended for disciplinary reasons.*

### 3. ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 If a student is suspended then the default expectation is that assessment will also be suspended unless the assessment is due within two weeks of the date of suspension. Exceptions to this may be made, following due consideration by the relevant parties identified in the relevant process that gave rise to the suspension. These should be considered on a case by case basis, for example, when a student requests that they be allowed to complete an assessment or when the circumstances of the suspension would not prohibit a student from completing an attempt at an assessment. A request to complete an assessment or to be exempt from an assessment will not be automatically granted; the request will be considered and due regard will be taken to the capacity of the student to perform in the circumstances, the University's safeguarding responsibilities and the need to ensure that the assessment is secure. This may mean, for example, that written coursework might be submitted but an examination could not reasonably be undertaken.
- 3.2 If a student has suspended they do not need to submit mitigating circumstances for outstanding assessment(s) unless they were suspended within two weeks of the assessment due date or examination, in which case a mitigating circumstances application should be made which explains the basis for the suspension and the reason that the assessment cannot be taken, as per the mitigating circumstances procedure. If a student is still suspended when the following attempt is scheduled they will not normally be expected to complete outstanding assessments unless this has been agreed and communicated to the student as outlined in 3.1 above.

- 3.3 These decisions should always be communicated in writing to Academic Support Services by the relevant parties to ensure that they are recorded on the student's record.

#### **Case Study 2**

*A student has suspended due to ill health at the end of a semester. This is within two weeks of the scheduled assessments. Taking into account the student's condition it is agreed that they are not required to complete assessments for the modules taken that semester until they return. They also have a refer attempt which they are due to take at the same time. They are not required to submit mitigating circumstances for either the refer assessment or the assessments for their current modules as this has been agreed as part of their suspension.*

#### **Case Study 3**

*A part-time student is employed by a company that sponsors their degree. Internal changes at the company have temporarily increased the student's workload considerably and the student has suspended studies until their work situation is resolved. The student had nearly completed two pieces of coursework and requests that they be allowed to submit these. After consideration of the student's circumstances, this is permitted, but other assessments are suspended. The student may choose to submit mitigating circumstances, but if these were accepted and a defer agreed then the student would not be expected to take the next attempt until after they had returned from suspension. Note that the student may still appeal the Assessment Board decisions made on these pieces of coursework and this would be done within the normal timeframe for appeals.*

## **4. RETURNING TO STUDY**

- 4.1 Students may return from suspension for a number of reasons; external factors may have been resolved or become manageable or a disciplinary and/or fitness to practise procedure may have been completed and the student permitted to return. The circumstances in which a student may be permitted to return are normally outlined in the relevant processes. For example, the support study policy discusses the evidence required to allow a student to return.
- 4.2 In instances where a student has suspended due to workload or ill health, the Personal Tutor (or a nominee) will normally contact a suspended student every six months to determine whether there have been any changes in the student's circumstances and whether an extension to the suspension or an earlier return to study may be feasible. A Personal Tutor (or a nominee) will also contact a student towards the end of their period of suspension to discuss what work will be required and how they will be supported in their return.
- 4.3 In instances where a student has been suspended due to disciplinary and/or fitness to practice considerations, they will be contacted once it has been agreed that they should return to discuss what support may need to be put in place to enable them to catch up.
- 4.4 Whatever the reason for suspension, prior to the student's scheduled return a meeting should be held between the student and relevant University staff (normally the Personal Tutor and Programme Leader) to discuss any required adjustments that may need to be made and/or work that will need to be undertaken by the student to

enable them to catch up on missed work. On some occasions, it may be agreed that a student should re-join at the beginning of a new academic year rather than part-way through a year.

## **5. Equality Impact Assessment**

5.1 The University of Bolton is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment to equality and diversity means that this policy has been screened in relation to the use of plain English, the promotion of the positive duty in relation to race, gender and disability and avoidance of discrimination to other equality groups related to age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or gender reassignment.

## **6. Other Related Policies**

6.1 Other relevant policies include:

- Student Attendance Policy
- Supported Study Policy
- Students' Dignity at Study Policy and Procedure (Bullying and Harassment)
- Student Non-Academic Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

7.1 This Policy will be monitored by the Director of Student Life.

7.2 The Policy will be reviewed as necessary

## **8. Dissemination of and Access to the Policy**

8.1 This Policy will be available on the University's website.

| <b>STUDENT SUSPENSION POLICY</b>                                       |  |
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| Document history (e.g. rationale for and dates of previous amendments) |  |