

Student Support Protocol

1. Introduction

As per [Queen's University 2030 Strategy](#) and our [#QUBeWell Mental Health and Wellbeing policy](#) the University believes that wellbeing is fundamental to a positive student learning experience. It is widely recognised that students who are happy, confident and able to establish meaningful relationships are better placed to achieve their full potential.

The University is committed to promoting a safe and supportive environment for students in which they can thrive and grow in independence, and which celebrates equality, diversity and inclusivity.

The Student Support Protocol is managed and reviewed by Student Wellbeing which is part of the wider Student Wellbeing And Accessible Learning Support Service. The Student Wellbeing team acts as a central co-ordinating point between Schools and Services, to implement this University-wide Protocol that:

- (a) Supports us to promote wellbeing and self-care to students while they are studying at Queen's.
- (b) Sets out a clear process for responding to concerns raised about students within Schools or service areas.
- (c) Establishes the steps taken when a student is identified as being at risk of harm to themselves, to others or from others.

The Protocol is intended to sit alongside School procedures for addressing student academic progression and student well-being, ensuring appropriate and compassionate communication and support within the School and identifying key points of contact and ways to co-ordinate support within the wider University.

2. Principles of the Protocol

The following principles underpin the development and implementation of Queen's Student Support Protocol:

- Information can be appropriately be shared in line with GDPR between colleagues about a student about who there are concerns in line with Queen's [Student Privacy Notice](#). In addition, if the student engages with Student Wellbeing and/or Accessible Learning Support, support will be provided following consent to the service's [Student Support Agreement](#).
- As adult learners, students should be supported in making decisions about their wellbeing. The University will only disclose information on their behalf if there is a perceived risk of harm to themselves, to others or from others. In such instances emergency services, students' GP and other health care professionals may be contacted. Due to the university's duty of care, information about risk may also be shared with parents/guardians and/or a Trusted or Emergency contact.
- Decisions on a student's academic progression is led by Schools through their established procedures. Students are encouraged to disclose personal circumstances that may be affecting their academic progression so these can be considered when progression decisions are being made.
- Every situation and student is individual, and therefore there is no one solution to a concern or crisis. The Protocol attempts to ensure appropriate staff involvement and flexibility to respond to circumstances.

This Protocol may be overtaken by the University's serious incident protocols though it is intended that the processes are able to sit within the wider University response as much as possible.

The Student Support Protocol may also run alongside other protocols or procedures.

3. Student Wellbeing and Accessible Learning Teams

The Student Wellbeing and Accessible Learning Teams comprise of specialist staff that offer advice, support and guidance to students and staff to support the management of a diverse range of student issues and concerns.

Support for Students

Students can contact the service directly to via the online [Contact Us form](#) or avail of the [Drop In](#) service. Further information on self-help resources, materials, information and guidance that students can use independently for their own benefit can be found on the [Student Wellbeing website](#).

Support for Staff

Staff can access the [Student Wellbeing](#) and [Accessible Learning Support](#) websites for information, advice and guidance that can help them to support students. Alternatively, if there is a specific or immediate wellbeing concern they can contact the service directly through the following means:

- [Staff Contact us Form](#)

This Staff contact us form/referral form is the most secure and confidential method of communicating sensitive information to Student Wellbeing however, we can also be contacted at:

- Email - Studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk
- Telephone 028 9097 2893

All information shared by staff about students is recorded in line with GDPR and could be requested by the student under Freedom of Information.

Identifying and Acting on Concerns

1. The Stepped Matchcare Model (Appendix 1) is a visual aid which outlines the various supports students may require depending on their identified Tier of support need.
2. The Risk Matrix table (Appendix 2) is more detailed information on risk, protective factors and possible recommendations considered by Student Wellbeing when supporting students. The School Concerns and Intervention and Monitoring Recommendations table (Appendix 3) is intended to work as an extension to School procedures for monitoring academic progression. It is recognised that School and Support Service Staff will monitor and manage certain levels of concerns before escalating to Student Wellbeing or other supports.
3. Referrals to the Student Wellbeing Services should be made in collaboration with the student where possible. Staff may wish to contact Student Wellbeing if they need any advice about making a referral. Student Wellbeing Services can provide additional support for staff in complex student situations and may have insight into services that the student is currently involved in. This ensures appropriate action is taken and/or potential use of the Support to Participate Fully in Studies/and or University Life Policy is considered.


Student Wellbeing service operate during normal office hours, 9-5 Monday to Friday. Circumstances permitting, it is important that staff contact the service, as early in the day as possible, when they first have serious concerns to allow Wellbeing to offer timely support, advice or guidance.

While it is important to weigh facts and consider all options, where you have concerns about a student you have a responsibility to act, Appendix 4 details the University's See, Say, Signpost whole university approach to supporting student mental health and wellbeing. A range of ["What to Do If"](#) scenarios are also included on the Student Wellbeing website to assist staff, call us on 028 90972893 or complete the [Staff Contact us Form](#)

4. Where wellbeing issues are identified staff should ensure that records of meetings, interventions and communication are stored in accordance with GDPR. Follow up review meetings may be necessary with Wellbeing Services and/or the student.

Appendix 1

STEPPED MATCHCARE MODEL

| Tier 0 Preventative and Protective | Tier 1 Supportive Guidance and Signposting | Tier 2 Assessment, Consultation & Therapeutic Interventions | Tier 3 Risk Management, De-escalation and Crisis Support |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy habit building based on Take 5 e.g. move, connect, sleep, eat well. • #QUBWell – Healthy Campus & Flag Days • Assessment Support Hub • Transitions Skills support for new students • Self-help Resources through Inspire Hub and Student Wellbeing website • Peer support groups e.g. ASD, PG Wellbeing Wednesday • Student-led events e.g. Mind Your Mood, International Student Guides, Clubs and Societies • Psycho-education workshops e.g. Look After Your Mate, Active Bystander, Consent, Dealing with Grief • Accommodation events • GP registration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from the team In person and/or online to connect with campus, be a healthy learner and avoid isolation • Drop-in Clinic – One Elmwood and in Faculty (UG/PG) • Walk and Talk sessions • Social Prescribing referral for Active Campus, Jump In volunteering, etc • In School Mental Health Ambassadors • Support to (re)engage with Schools • Report and Support referrals • Other support service referrals e.g. LDS, SU Advice, Accessible Learning, Careers • Accommodation support • “Keep In Touch” contacts • GP appointment support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 Wellbeing consultations • Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) and guided self help • Low level CBT • Counselling referral and 24/7 helpline • Support at Student Progress meetings • Support to Participate Fully in Study and University life, meetings and review • Safe and Healthy Relationship guidance • Referrals to external partners • Occupational Health assessment & recommendations • Multi disciplinary Student of Concern support • Reasonable Adjustments with Accessible Learning Support, including working diagnosis • Support for short term impairments • 1:1 Support provider | <p>Internal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management • De-escalation support • Safety planning • Links with Trusted Contacts • Inspire Support Calls • QUB Accommodation check-ins <p>In liaison with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Mental Health Service (BHSCT) • Inspire Wellbeing • GP's & CPN's • Mental Health Liaison Teams • Community Mental Health Teams • CAMHS <div>  QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENT WELLBEING AND ACCESSIBLE LEARNING </div> |

Appendix 2: Risk Matrix - Risk and Protective Factors

| Risk Level | Exploration | Risk factors | Protective Factors | Possible Recommendations |
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| No/Low Risk I'm managing and functioning well in general | Self-care routine No history of MH issues No self-harm or history Some low mood or mild Stress or situation having a minor impact on mood Has a small number of risk factors currently | Risk to Self Factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenting issues not significantly impacting on mental health Occasional / mild symptoms of low mood Reduced motivation Mild Signs of procrastination Low level anxiety Increased level of stress Worried about studies or home life Isolation Reduced motivation Problems sleeping (too much/too little) Some problems eating Risk to Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No indicators Risk From Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Indicators | In the main: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated and positive outlook Healthy study and home life Well supported by family and friends Engaging in studies Healthy study/work/life balance Good School support | Tier 0 and Tier 1 Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with healthy, balanced approach Signpost to relevant services Early intervention support Assessment Support Hub Inspire self-help hub Learning and Development Engage in WOW events School support meeting – signpost to AOS or P/T for academic guidance or queries Clubs and Societies Chaplaincies |

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| <p>Low to Medium Risk</p> <p>I'm mainly functioning well but this issue is starting to impact my health, wellbeing and/or studies</p> | <p>Feeling overwhelmed by pressure of course</p> <p>Feeling confused, isolated, lack of focus</p> <p>Frustration/reduced self-esteem which may present as scratching skin, pulling hair, being overly self-critical</p> <p>Some low mood and/or increasing levels of anxiety</p> <p>Avoidance behaviours</p> <p>Out if character behaviours</p> | <p>Risk to Self Factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing interest studies/hobbies • Feeling disconnected • Becoming overwhelmed • Worried and over thinking • Lack of motivation • Risk taking behaviour • History of TLNWL (6 months ago or more) but not current • Recent fleeting TLNWL – (3 months ago) not ongoing and no intent or plan <p>Risk to Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No indicators <p>Risk From Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive family - able to talk to them • Feels able to confide to friends • Good School support • Engaging in supports offered • Accesses GP/health services appropriately • Engaging in Disability & Wellbeing • Engaging in wider university supports | <p>Tier 0, 1, 2 Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 meeting with WA for wellbeing strategies • Student Support meeting with School • Learning and Development • PWP CBT • Assessment Support Hub • Inspire HUB • Inspire guided self-help • Inspire counselling <p>Support to Register with Accessible Learning</p> |
| <p>Medium Risk</p> <p>This issue is causing me distress and impacting on several areas of my health, wellbeing/and or studies</p> | <p>Combination of a high number of low-risk factors or some medium-risk factors coupled with low protective factors</p> | <p>Risk to Self Factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed self-harm as a positive coping strategy • History of self-harm (6mths ago or more) • Thoughts of self-harm – no intent • Poor academic performance | <p>Explore where student sits in terms of protective factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive family - able to talk to them • Feels able to confide to friends • Good School support | <p>Tier 1, 2, 3 Supports</p> <p>Consult - Actions agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 meeting with WA for wellbeing strategies • GP - Student to arrange appointment (unless there is a special request) follow |

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| | <p>Self-Harm:</p> <p>Thoughts of self- harm or</p> <p>compulsion to self-harm or self-harming currently</p> <p>TLNWL (No intent):</p> <p>Talking to friends about thoughts of ending life and reading articles on-line about it.</p> <p>Explore when and where thoughts of LNWL occur</p> <p>Ask about plan or intent</p> <p>Plan can be thinking of ways but would never do it i.e.crossing the road could get hit by a car – but no intent</p> <p>Looking for ways of SI online but stating no intent</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unhealthy coping mechanisms (alcohol, drugs, etc) • International student with limited connections • TLNWL recent (past 6 months) – without plan or intent • Feelings of hopelessness/helplessness, worthless, ambivalence to living, withdrawn, concerning language • Symptoms of impulsivity, aggression (risk taking behaviour) • Sleep significantly impacting daily routine • Depressed, with current low mood and poor coping strategies • High level of anxiety impacting ability to function and look after self • Managed Dysfunctional eating/Eating Disorder impacting on mental health • Excluding self from social contact/interactions and activities and routines • Avoidance behaviours • Severe procrastination • OCD and severe perfectionism • Unmotivated, negative outlook • Unhealthy study and home life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in supports offered • Accesses GP/health services appropriately • Engaging with Disability & Wellbeing • Engaging in wider university supports | <p>up letter can be sent by student wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusted Contact - Encourage / support student to link with TC • School - Support student to engage with School • STCS - Consider Level 1 • Inspire - consider counselling and self refer through Hub • Student Mental Health – discussion to consider referral • 24/7 Helpline information – clear information on how to access out of hours supports. • Keep in contact with student to get updates on actions including GP contact and TC involvement <p>Consult and/or R&S Consult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&S Support • Social Services • PSNI |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not supported by family and friends • Not Engaging in studies • No healthy study/work/life balance • No School support <p>Risk to Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impulsive acts/Aggression to others, impact on others • Child protection/safeguarding issues <p>Risk From Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe & Health relationships issues • Safeguarding for U18's and vulnerable students | | <p>Consult and/or R&S Consult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&S Support • Social Services • PSNI |
| <p>Med/High Risk</p> <p>I am not functioning well and/or am using unhealthy coping strategies to manage the issue</p> | <p>One or more med/high risk factors present coupled with low protective factors</p> <p>Explore statements made about SI – when and how often do the thoughts come. How</p> | <p>Risk to Self Factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong TLNWL, more intense & consistent thoughts of ending life & intent to end life • Ongoing unmanaged self-harm, strong feelings about significant self-harm alarming the student • Any previous undisclosed suicide attempt | <p>Explore where student sits in terms of protective factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive family - able to talk to them • Feels able to confide to friends • Good School support • Engaging in supports offered | <p>Tier 2, 3 Supports</p> <p>Consult – Immediate Safety planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP – WA to contact GP (possible follow up letter) • UHC request for urgent/temporary registration and risk reported |

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| | <p>strong and immediate is the intent</p> <p>How long do the thoughts last and what do they do to relieve the negative thoughts, what stops them acting on thoughts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mood significantly impacted by bereavement/serious illness of another • Previous close bereavement by suicide, • Recent attempts of suicide (past 6 months) • Persistent suicide ideation with plan • Dysfunctional eating/Eating Disorder impacting on mental health – not accessing support • Signs of psychosis, paranoia or previous history of same • Does not want to burden family/issues related to family dynamics • Friends are not supportive • Culture – mental health is a stigma • No local support • Reluctant to talk to anyone/lack of trust • Not engaging with GP/not registered with GP <p>Risk to Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impulsive acts/Aggression to others, significant impact on others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses GP/health services appropriately • Engaging in Disability & Wellbeing • Engaging in wider university supports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusted Contact – WA to contact TC or student with WBA support within session. • TC declined – consult • Liaise with current primary care provider • Inspire or Lifeline check-in • Flag to accommodation providers • Accommodation Check-ins if QUB • School - Support student to engage with School • STCS - Consider Level 1/2 • Inspire counselling referral discussion • Student Mental Health – discussion to consider referral • 24/7 Helpline information – • 1:1 meeting and follow up with WA • Wider university supports |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant Child protection/safeguarding issues <p>Risk From Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe & Health relationships issues Safeguarding for U18's and vulnerable students | | <p>Consult and/or R&S Consult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> R&S Support Social Services PSNI <p>Consult and/or R&S Consult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> R&S Support Social Services PSNI |
| <p>High Risk</p> <p>I am having extreme difficulty in coping and my health, wellbeing and/or studies are at risk</p> | <p>One or more high risk factors present</p> <p>Ask direct questions about the thoughts, plan and intent. "Do you intend to end your life?" How do you intend to end your life?"</p> <p>"What has stopped you taking your life in the past?"</p> <p>"Can you keep yourself safe today?"</p> | <p>Risk to Self Factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suicidal thoughts with urgent/imminent plan and intent Reporting they can't keep themselves safe or unable to confirm that they can Unable to agree a safety plan Signs of psychosis, paranoia or previous history of same Struggling to identify a trusted contact or someone to contact for support Poor/no relationship with family Extremely isolated/no local support network | <p>Explore where student sits in terms of protective factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive family - able to talk to them Feels able to confide to friends Good School support Engaging in supports offered Accesses GP/health services appropriately | <p>Consult where possible before ringing 999 for emergency service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxi to hospital (must be arranged via a consult) using Wellbeing taxi account, if friend or TC not able to accompany, consult re: ambulance Contact Trusted Contact with student permission / or consult with Head of Services if permission not given Ring 999 then consult |

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| | | <p>In the act of suicide</p> <p>Student at immediate risk who leaves during appointment</p> <p>Risk to Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At immediate risk of harming others • Safeguarding/child protection requiring immediate action from Statutory Body <p>Risk From Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At immediate risk of harm from others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in Disability & Wellbeing • Engaging in wider university supports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact student and ask that they return immediately otherwise contact emergency services and consult • Consult if possible but do not delay in contacting Emergency Services • Consult if possible but do not delay in contacting Emergency Services |
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Appendix 3: School Concerns, Recommended Interventions and Recommended Monitoring

| Concerns | Concern Level | Recommended Interventions | Recommended Monitoring |
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| One/several of: Missing/non-engagement (out of contact with school/ friend/ family) Suicidal Ideation with plans and/or intent Significant and recent self-harm Significant risk to others or from others High risk-taking behaviour | High | School to make immediate contact with student Wellbeing via staff contact form, telephone or email <u>Student Engaging with the School:</u> Student Support Meeting/Support to Participate Fully in Studies/and or Stage 1 or 2 meeting arranged – Student Wellbeing can offer guidance on which is appropriate on a case by case basis <u>Student Not Engaging with the School:</u> Establish key facts, e.g. last point of contact, last time student was seen and any attempts made to contact student. Contact Student Wellbeing. Options may include contacting trusted or emergency contact, Welfare check through PSNI or Accommodation team. Where there is significant risk to others, the Major incident plan may be invoked | <u>Student Engaging</u> Determine appropriate follow-up (initially within 24hrs) Ongoing follow-up (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, etc.) for at least 3 months to ensure student continues to engage with identified and agreed supports and actions <u>Disengagement pattern repeats</u> Flag with Student Wellbeing immediately. |
| A combination of: Poor attendance at scheduled classes Absence from formal exams Change in personal appearance and behaviours Poor performance in assessments / exams Recurrent sickness Breach of Conduct Regulations Recurrent Accident Reports | Medium | School to make contact with student via email and/or telephone within 48hrs of concerns being identified. If relevant, contact Student Wellbeing Service to discuss specific case and agree next steps. <u>Student Engaging with the School:</u> Student Support Meeting/Support to Participate Fully in Studies/and or Stage 1 or 2 meeting arranged – Student Wellbeing can offer guidance on which is appropriate on a case by case basis | <u>Student Engaging</u> Determine appropriate follow-up (initially within 48hrs) Ongoing follow-up (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, etc.) for at least 1 month to ensure student continues to engage with identified and agreed supports and actions <u>Disengagement pattern continues</u> Flag with Student Wellbeing and follow normal school process around progression /presumed withdrawal implications |

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| Non-payment of Tuition fees Visa difficulties Absence from Halls of Residence or private accommodation | | <p><u>Student Not Engaging with School</u></p> <p>If student chooses not to attend any agreed meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with relevant staff in School and Student Wellbeing to agree next steps, which could include; send email and letter from appropriate member of staff in School outlining concerns and relevant support options as well as consequences of non-engagement, such as presumed withdrawn. | |
| <p>Examples:</p> <p>Sporadic attendance at class</p> <p>Missing assessment deadlines</p> | Low | <p>Staff member that has identified concerns should send email to student outlining low levels of concerns and relevant support options within 3 days.</p> <p>If relevant, request the student to contact School to arrange a Student Support Meeting.</p> <p><u>Student Engaging with School</u></p> <p>Arrange a Student Support Meeting to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish issues • Discuss support options <p><u>Student Not Engaging with School</u></p> <p>If student chooses not respond or chooses not to attend Student Support Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with relevant School staff and agree next steps, which could include; sending an email and letter from appropriate member of staff in School outlining concerns and relevant support options as well as consequences of sporadic attendance and missed deadlines. | <p><u>Student Engaging</u></p> <p>Follow normal School process around follow up</p> <p><u>Disengagement pattern continues</u></p> <p>Follow normal school process around attendance and submission and request a non-urgent reach out to student from Student Wellbeing via staff contact us form</p> |

Appendix 4 See Say Signpost

SEE



Do you see a change in behaviours or actions?

- Increase in absences (class, tutorials, social events)
- Change in performance
- Mood swings
- Not replying to messages, or being distant
- Change in appearance
- Tearful
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs
- Appearing restless or agitated

Some signs might not be visible - life events, bereavement, sleep issues, low self esteem, suicidal thoughts. It is always good to check in and ask how others are doing



SAY



If you notice or have concerns, say something.

- Reassure the person it is okay not to be okay
- Remain non-judgemental and express empathy
- Use open ended questions
- Take time to talk to the person and consider further supports

Use phrases of control and safety:

- "Have you spoken to anyone else about this?"
- "I can see how difficult it must be for you."
- "I am here to help you get the support you need."
- "I am sorry to hear about your loss, how are you?"
- "Do you feel you can keep yourself safe?"

SIGNPOST



There are a range of supports available. When supporting a student it is important to consider which services are best suited to support with their mental health, wellbeing or other concerns.

Remember you are not on your own in these situations.



Scan the QR code to find out more information on what support services are available

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger or experiencing a mental health crisis, call 999 or go to the local A&E department

For 24/7 support:

Inspire Student Helpline - 0808 800 0016
Lifeline Crisis Response Helpline - 0808 800 8000