

## Response to Student Consultation on the Fitness to Study Policy

The Working Group reviewing this policy was grateful to the students who participated in the consultation and provided considered and helpful comments. The policy has completed the approval process and has been published in English and Welsh ([link here](#))

As a result of the comments received, we have amended the policy as follows:

1. The definition of Behaviour Contrary to the Principles of the Student Charter in the Glossary has been amended – it is now more specific and includes examples of the inappropriate contact including frequency and timing of contact that would be considered problematic. However, it was not felt appropriate to state a frequency that could be considered as this might be deter a student with from making contact. The following form of words has been used:
  - Persistent late-night contact with tutors outside of their available hours
  - Persistent contact not study-related e.g. trying to engage staff in conversations about their or your personal life
  - Lengthy content of message
  - Forum content that causes distress to others or makes you vulnerable
  - Expecting answers to correspondence outside staff published response times.

These examples are taken from the types of behaviours that are seen and, in our experience may lead to a Fitness to Study intervention if requests to stop the concerning behaviour are not followed.

2. A short summary of the policy is being prepared for students which will explain the principles and how the Fitness to Study process will operate. This will be made available to students alongside the policy.
3. A comment was made about the requirement for synchronous telephone meetings at key points during the Fitness to Study process . This was discussed within the review group and it was felt to be important that the any student within the Fitness to Study process has the opportunity to discuss their circumstances and the situation directly and for there to be a dialogue. Individual circumstances will be taken into account and dealt with on a case by case basis if there are issues which make a synchronous meeting difficult to organise.
4. Concern was raised that the Fitness to Study Policy might be used where the student has a mental health condition. It was suggested that there could be a 'separate document outlining how for students with disabilities and tutors the rules should be adapted to take account to certain disabilities and what modifications tutors should look at making for students with disabilities'. The review group considered this and concluded that it is only under exceptional circumstances that the Fitness to Study Policy would be invoked without prior discussion of the behaviours that were causing concerns. At this point the student would be encouraged to engage with the Disability Support Team (if they have not already done so) to consider what appropriate reasonable adjustments can be put in place. The review group did however feel that there should be a link to the OU's Accessibility Policy from the Fitness to Study Policy to highlight the link, which has been added. The group also revised the paragraph dealing with the review of progress at the end of stage one to ensure that it read more collaboratively.

5. A comment was made about how students could make a report about their concerns for a fellow student. This was discussed by the review group who agreed that it was not appropriate for the policy to be invoked by a student and that concerns should be raised with their tutor or SST.

We would like to once again thanks students for their valuable contributions.