**Student Mental Health Policy**

**1.0 Introduction and background**

* 1. The University of Northampton believes that no student should be disadvantaged from succeeding in their studies due to mental health difficulties or conditions. The University is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students who need to access mental health support services at any point during their time at the University.
  2. This policy is designed to provide advice and guidance to:
* Students who experience mental health difficulties or a mental health condition during their studies on what support they can expect to receive from the University.
* University staff who have a role in supporting and advising students with mental health difficulties.
* Students who have concerns about the mental health of another student.

**2.0 Scope of the Policy**

2.1 The policy covers any current or prospective student with a mental health difficulty or condition and outlines the University’s and individuals’ responsibilities in these circumstances. It should be noted that the terms “mental health difficulty” and “mental health condition” applies to students with both longstanding and short-term difficulties with their mental health.

2.2 The University is committed to creating an environment which supports good mental health and is committed to supporting students to ensure their wellbeing and the well-being of our campus community. However, it must be highlighted that the expertise of the University is in the provision of higher education. There will be certain situations that will be beyond the scope of our in-house mental health support services to deal with e.g. complexity of needs, high level of risk to self or others. Where this is the case this should be made clear to students and they should be encouraged to seek help from other services that are available to them. This might mean signposting students to engage with their GP or local NHS mental health services.

**3.0 Rights and responsibilities**

3.1 This section covers rights and responsibilities for students, staff and the University.

**Students**

3.2 Students have a right to attend and study without being subject to prejudice or discrimination as a result of any mental health difficulties or conditions.

3.3 All students experiencing any mental health difficulty or condition have a right to support from the University taking into consideration the limits of support the University can provide.

3.4 Where possible students are expected to inform the University at the earliest opportunity of any difficulties, they are having to allow the University to support and advise them as necessary.

3.5 Students are advised in the first instance to consider raising their concerns with their personal tutor or directly with the confidential Counselling and Mental Health team services. Students can contact the Mental Health Service ([mha@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:mha@northampton.ac.uk)) or Counselling Service (counsellors@northampton.ac.uk) directly who will be able to assist. Alternatively, students can speak with staff at the Student Information Desk in the Learning Hub who will be able to advise and explain to the student the services UON provide and how they can be accessed.

**Staff**

3.6 Staff should ensure that all students are given the same opportunities to succeed in their studies. Additional support for students experiencing mental health difficulties or conditions may be required to enable their progression. Formally those needs may be communicated to tutors and the exam office via an AIR (Academic Inclusion Report).

3.7 Any disclosure made by a student will be treated in the strictest of confidence in line with section 4 of this policy.

3.8 Staff should be mindful of their role and limitations when assisting students with mental health difficulties or conditions and should seek advice from the appropriate specialist teams within Student Services, such as the Counselling and Mental Health Team or Student Support and Advice Team.

3.9 Staff can raise concerns about a student’s mental health via the Student Health and Wellbeing- Emerging Concern Form.

[Student Health and Wellbeing- Emerging Concern Form (office.com)](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=YwRVxLJ2vU61fPT30WTHD1BbljLgJcRDm4QxH-S8uV1UQlpOMjNUMVpOVFJMTk8wSFEwRUZVRlc3RCQlQCN0PWcu)

**University**

3.10 The University has a duty of care to all of its students and we do provide Counselling and Mental Health support services to students to promote their wellbeing and their academic success.

3.11 The University has a responsibility to promote and publicise information and guidance about mental health issues and the available support to both staff and students to encourage open and inclusive discussion as issues arise.

3.12 The University will review and develop this policy in light of feedback from students and changes in the HE sector in regard to mental health support.

3.13 The University will consider reasonable adjustments for students with mental health conditions. Our Mental Health Service and ASSIST work in partnership with students to make recommendations via AIR (Academic Inclusion Reports) to enable engagement and progression with study.

3.14 All actions and decisions made under this policy will take account of the University’s responsibilities as set out in the University of Northampton Safeguarding policy.

[UON Safeguarding Framework.doc (sharepoint.com)](https://mynorthamptonac.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/SASAdmin/EYdRbcFlPXtBvvm0chRh4hMBwiibNgeRzzcEbgwJfTXyyg?e=BRkXem)

**4.0 Confidentiality and Disclosure**

4.1 As with all matters of a personal nature we will respect the confidentiality of the information any student provides us with unless we have a very good reason to share information as detailed in section 5 of this policy.

4.2 We will not normally disclose personal information about individual students to third parties or external agencies without the express consent of the student. Our definition of a third party or external agency includes a student’s family, guardian, sponsor, doctor or other health professional. This list is for example only and is not exhaustive.

4.3 We would expect to share certain information within the University with those members of staff who need it in order to provide support and reasonable adjustments that might be necessary in line with the Equality Act (2010). We would normally obtain the student’s consent before we do so unless circumstances as outlined in section 5 were to arise.

**5.0 Disclosure Without Consent**

5.1 If we decide we need to disclose information about a student without their knowledge or in the event they refuse their consent, we will only do so in circumstances where we judge that there is a risk of harm to themselves or others or if there is an obligation arising from the requirements of their programme of study. Such a decision will not be taken lightly nor, except in an emergency, will it be taken without consultation with senior members of the University management team.

5.2 The interests of the individual will always be considered in the context of the community as a whole and there may be rare occasions when the interests of others take priority over the interests of individuals. In such circumstance we may take action either under our Health, Well-being and Fitness to Study policy or our Fitness to Practice policy as detailed in section 6 below.

5.3 Some professional programmes of study have specific requirements in relation to Fitness to Practice and these requirements may override an individual’s stated preferences in relation to information sharing. This will be discussed with and explained to the affected student if this situation were to arise.

5.4 When responding to students experiencing mental health difficulties, we will endeavour to act in an individual’s best interests. Sometimes this will mean taking difficult decisions and on occasion taking decisions with which an individual may not agree. In such circumstances we will always explain the basis for the decision with the affected person and ensure that such decisions are fully recorded.

**6.0 Conduct and Discipline**

6.1 With Mental health issues do not exclude students from the requirement to comply with the University’s regulations on conduct.

<https://searchtundra.northampton.ac.uk/?tag=bf129434-57c9-48e7-ad8e-1f12970070fd>

6.2 In a situation where a student’s ability to participate in disciplinary procedures is affected by a mental health issue, we will endeavour to deal with the situation sensitively, ensuring that the student is fit to participate and is supported in doing so.

6.3 The University offers some programmes which can lead to registration as a practising professional. The University therefore has a responsibility to the professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and the wider public to consider matters which may bring into question a student’s capability to meet professional codes of conduct. In such situations we reserve the right to review the student’s suitability to continue their chosen course in line with our Fitness to Practise policy.

<https://searchtundra.northampton.ac.uk/?tag=ea5494bf-79c9-42b5-b620-5fb34d20ed4f>

6.4 For other courses where it is felt that allowing a student to continue their studies, at that point in time, would be detrimental to either their health or ability to academically succeed we may review the student’s suitability to continue their chosen course in line with our Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study policy.

<https://searchtundra.northampton.ac.uk/?tag=fa8fbad7-9acd-4e5a-bb10-740b822d9807>

6.5 Use of either of these policies will not preclude the student from continuing their studies later if they wish to. The purpose of both policies in not punitive but intended to allow the student to take a break from study to address their current health issues with a view to returning to complete their studies with us in the future.

**7.0** **Studying away from the University**

7.1 Distance from the University may place some constraints on the support we are able to offer but we will always endeavour to provide support and signposting as required at the time.

**8.0 Links to support services and guidance:**

<https://mynorthamptonac.sharepoint.com/sites/student/Pages/counselling-and-mental-health.aspx>

<https://mynorthamptonac.sharepoint.com/sites/student/Downloads/need-help-in-a-crisis.pdf>

<https://mynorthamptonac.sharepoint.com/sites/student/Pages/Student-Support-and-Advice.aspx>

<https://mynorthamptonac.sharepoint.com/sites/student/Pages/Disability.aspx>

<https://mynorthamptonac.sharepoint.com/sites/student/Pages/doctors-surgery.aspx>

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=YwRVxLJ2vU61fPT30WTHD1BbljLgJcRDm4QxH-S8uV1UQlpOMjNUMVpOVFJMTk8wSFEwRUZVRlc3RCQlQCN0PWcu>

**9.0 Links to student policy documents and guidance:**

9.1 Health Wellbeing and Fitness to Study

<https://searchtundra.northampton.ac.uk/?tag=fa8fbad7-9acd-4e5a-bb10-740b822d9807>

9.2 Fitness to Practice

<https://searchtundra.northampton.ac.uk/?tag=ea5494bf-79c9-42b5-b620-5fb34d20ed4f>

9.3. Mitigating Circumstances

<https://searchtundra.northampton.ac.uk/?tag=78bf2c82-8da2-458c-947f-88f07a218bc9>

9.4 Student Code of Conduct

<https://searchtundra.northampton.ac.uk/?tag=bf129434-57c9-48e7-ad8e-1f12970070fd>

**9.0 Summary Sheet:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Policy Title:** | |
| UoN Mental Health Policy | |
| **Purpose of Policy and to whom it applies (please specify cohorts):** | |
| The purpose of this policy is to outline the University’s approach to supporting the mental health of its student body.  This policy relates to all current and prospective students of the University of Northampton. | |
| **Owner and Department:** | |
| David Fitzgerald (Head of Student Services) | |
| **Principal contact:** | |
| Kathryn Kendon, Academic Registrar | |
| **Dissemination and implementation plan:** | |
| Via SEC and SSECs  Via web | |
| **Date of initial committee approval (state committee name):** | TBC |
| **Date of Senate approval:** | TBC |
| **Date for implementation and cohorts to which it applies:** | September 2020 for all new and continuing students |
| **Proposed date of annual update:** | June 2021 |
| **Date of last annual update:** | N/A |
| **Proposed date of full review:** | June 2022 |
| **Date of last full review:** | N/A |
| **Version number and date:** | 2.0 August 2021 |