

## Student Engagement & Support Through Studies Policy

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<b>Lead contact:</b>	Student Support Manager
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# Student Engagement & Support Through Studies Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD) Student Engagement & Support Through Studies Policy refers to a student's ability to fully engage with their course of study, and to fulfil the expectations of the training. It is a NSCD policy designed to support the needs of students, to provide them with the best opportunity to succeed on their course.
- 1.2. The policy applies to all students registered on a taught or postgraduate programme delivered and/or validated by NSCD.
- 1.3. The School expects that students abide by the published Student Codes of Practice, which lists the expected conduct and behaviours of students whilst undertaking their studies. In cases where there are concerns that a student is unable to meet these expectations, and thus the requirements of the training, the Student Engagement & Support through Studies policy may be instigated.
- 1.4. The policy:
  - 1.4.1. Clarifies the expectations with respect to engagement with a student's course of study.
  - 1.4.2. Explains supportive action taken when the expectations are not met due to engagement, health, behaviour or wellbeing concerns.
  - 1.4.3. Complies with the regulatory requirements of the student terms and conditions, which include requirements regarding attendance and engagement with learning and teaching activity.
  - 1.4.4. Ensures that NSCD can meet the requirements of UKVI relating to students sponsored by NSCD under the UK Government's Points-Based Immigration System (PBS).

## 2. Scope & Principles

- 2.1. Regular engagement is an important aspect of learning and the student experience. Students who are able to fully engage with all aspects of their course are more likely to succeed with their studies. This policy is designed to support student achievement by encouraging students to engage actively with all aspects of their studies.
- 2.2. NSCD has a duty of care to support students whose studies and/or ability to engage with their studies might be compromised by ill health or other circumstances. These procedures are intended as a supportive framework to afford students the best opportunity to complete their studies successfully and to assist them to recognise when they might need additional support, or an interruption or break from study. Students are encouraged to actively engage with these procedures, which will often include taking appropriate steps to manage their own health and wellbeing to fulfil their academic potential. This policy will be implemented in accordance with the Equality Act (2010).
- 2.3. NSCD offers a bespoke support structure for students to access, however it is recognised that there are many reasons why a student may not or will not engage with the support or advice given by NSCD. In these instances, to support both parties, we would make arrangements or suggestions with the student to access alternative support or activities (particularly related to curriculum activities which support learning outcomes).
- 2.4. The policy also provides supportive procedures which can be used by NSCD staff when a

student's health, well-being and/or behaviour is, or appears to be at risk of, having a detrimental impact upon their studies or ability to cope with student life, or where health, well-being and/or behaviour poses a wider risk or has a detrimental impact on others.

- 2.5. The aim of this policy is to sustain the progress of such students in a supportive environment whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of other members of the School community. The policy provides a framework within which the School can promote a positive, sensitive, and co-ordinated approach to the management of this. The procedures which are underpinned by this policy are designed to achieve this by being flexible, supportive, and proportionate.
- 2.6. Where necessary, variations from the policy may be introduced with appropriate agreement based on specific programme requirements, which must be indicated in programme documentation.
- 2.7. All student records in relation to student engagement, and decisions taken in relation to student registration status, will be subject to the NSCD Data Schedules and Privacy Notices.
- 2.8. In instances where a student chooses not to engage with support provided by NSCD, NSCD will not be responsible for supporting any costs involved in alternative activity or external support undertaken, we will however always work with a student to help ensure appropriate support is in place.
- 2.9. This policy and procedures are designed to support students to complete their course by assisting them in a supportive and flexible manner and should not be used as an alternative to other procedures such as the Non-Academic Misconduct procedures<sup>1</sup>. Decisions made under any stage of these procedures should be made with the agreement of the student. Where there is a failure to agree, the case may be escalated to a further Stage of the Student Engagement & Support through Studies procedures.

### **3. Student Expectations**

#### **3.1. Attendance & Engagement**

- 3.1.1. NSCD provides conservatoire dance training and expects students to engage fully with their programme of study.
- 3.1.2. NSCD requires attendance for all taught sessions, tutorials, rehearsals, performances, and practical assessments, where this is in the student's best interest. Regular attendance supports the development of individual professional practice and is one indicator of how effectively a student is engaging with their training and education.
- 3.1.3. NSCD recognises that engagement with a programme of study takes many forms including participation in on-site teaching, group work, workshops, and online interactive content, plus completion of non-interactive content, coursework, and assessments.
- 3.1.4. As training professionals, attendance expectations replicates the professional world in which you are present unless there are circumstances that prevent this, such as illness or personal problems. In these instances, it is expected that the reason for any absence will be communicated as quickly and clearly as possible.
- 3.1.5. Students who at times cannot participate physically are expected and actively encouraged to be present and engage creatively in class, unless there is a reason this may not be recommended e.g. illness
- 3.1.6. Where it is not in a student's best interest to be in attendance or full attendance, the Student Support Manager will discuss alternative approaches such as a reduced

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<sup>1</sup> All student facing policies can be found at <https://www.nscd.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures/>

timetable, or develop an action plan, or enter into one of the formal stages of the Support Through Studies process as required.

### **3.2. Absence Reporting**

#### **3.2.1. All Students**

- 3.2.1.1. NSCD recognises that, occasionally, students may be unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness, injury, medical appointments, or personal circumstances.
- 3.2.1.2. If a student cannot attend a timetabled session, they should report their absence via the Absence Reporting process documented in the Student Handbook: <https://moodle.nscd.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=638>. Whilst it is preferable that students report on the day of absence, forms may be submitted in retrospect.
- 3.2.1.3. Students can self-certify for up to 5 days and should report on each day of their absence. Evidence may be required to support absences of more than 5 days, depending on the circumstances.
- 3.2.1.4. If a student (over 18) is absent for more than 5 consecutive days NSCD will attempt to contact the student. If we cannot contact them, we will contact the named secondary contact to ensure the health and wellbeing of the student.
- 3.2.1.5. After two weeks if a student has not formally reported an absence or expected return date and has not responded to communications from NSCD they will be referred to Stage 4 of the Student Engagement & Support through Studies Policy (Highly Serious or Significant Concerns) and a Case Conference Panel will be convened.
- 3.2.1.6. If a student is experiencing personal problems or illness which is impacting on their studies and/or leading to longer term absences, they should seek help with a member of staff as soon as possible to enable us to provide timely, appropriate support.
- 3.2.1.7. If a student misses a scheduled assessment due to illness, injury or personal circumstances, they should complete a mitigating circumstances form on the VLE and may need to present evidence to be considered by the Mitigation Sub-Committee.

#### **3.2.2 Students Under 18**

- 3.2.2.1 Students who are under the age of 18 should ensure that they complete an absence form before 9am on the day of absence, where possible. If the student is absent without notifying the school, NSCD will attempt to contact the student. If they cannot be contacted, NSCD will contact the student's Emergency Contact.

#### **3.2.3 Students on a Tier 4 Visa**

- 3.2.3.1 The attendance levels of overseas students studying in the UK on a Student visa will be monitored weekly. NSCD is required to report non-attendance to the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) which could potentially revoke a student visa.
- 3.2.3.2 A student can request leave in advance under certain conditions via the absence form on the VLE.

### 3.2.4 Professional Development Absences

- 3.2.4.1 Students may apply for an absence for professional development opportunities in advance via the Professional Development Absence form within the Student Handbook: <https://moodle.nscd.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=638> .
- 3.2.4.2 Full details on the protocol for requesting professional development absences, and clarification on when such requests are approved or declined, are detailed within the handbook.
- 3.2.4.3 Professional development may include company classes; teaching placements (including BA2/BA3 teaching modules); professional projects or workshops; auditions & interviews related to further study or employment.

## 4. Attendance Monitoring

### 4.1. Attendance Records

- 4.1.1. Registers are taken for most NSCD timetabled classes through the timetable system, ASIMUT, and attendance is carefully monitored by the Quality Office. Some timetabled sessions may be un-registered, for example, directed study sessions.
- 4.1.2. Attendance records are kept on a termly basis and students will have a percentage attendance for the term based on the number of registered classes and number of absences in the term. Attendance records are re-set at the start of each term.
- 4.1.3. There are 4 attendance categories that can be recorded in ASIMUT:

**PRESENT** – recorded when a student is present and engaged in class

**REPORTED** – recorded when a student reports an absence via the absence form. Reported absences will impact the student’s attendance records however they are considered when reviewing student attendance and deciding on appropriate action for students with low attendance.

**ABSENT** – recorded when there is no known reason for absence. Unreported absences will impact the student’s attendance records.

**AUTHORISED** – recorded at the discretion of the Quality Office, Head of Faculty, or Student Support Manager as appropriate. Some absences are authorised automatically (for example, internal support appointments) whilst others are dependent on circumstances (for example, medical appointments or applications for professional development). Authorised absences will not impact the student’s attendance records.

- 4.1.4. Where a taught student is studying externally to NSCD such as on placement or exchange, responsibility for recording attendance will lie with the partner institution or company, who must inform the NSCD Quality Office of unreported absences.
- 4.1.5. Where a taught student is undertaking a placement, regular contact with the placement tutor at NSCD will serve as evidence of ongoing attendance and engagement. Such contact is usually expected to take place as agreed in their agreed timetable or schedule.

### 4.2. Engagement Monitoring

- 4.2.1. Where a student is not meeting the expectation of attending all scheduled sessions, it is

important NSCD understands why, and considers, alongside the student, their individual circumstances and what support can be put in place to help the student better engage with their curriculum.

- 4.2.2. Attendance is reviewed termly through attendance meetings between the Quality Office and the Student Support & Wellbeing Manager and student engagement is discussed at the Student Review Board.
- 4.2.3. Students should aim to achieve at least 90% attendance throughout each term. Attendance will also be checked at the half term point and students contacted informally to notify them of any attendance issues that could be rectified in the second half of term, with support as needed.
- 4.2.4. Attendance reports contain the full profile of each student whose aggregate attendance is below 90% at that point in time, allowing NSCD to review any patterns that may appear across different elements of curriculum. Authorised and professional development absences do not affect attendance levels, and mitigation and reported absences are taken into consideration where appropriate.
- 4.2.5. After the termly attendance meetings, students who are below the expected attendance level receive a 'raise of concern' notification via email.
- 4.2.6. Each student is responsible for their own attendance and may request to know their current attendance percentage at any time by contacting the Quality Office or Student Services.
- 4.2.7. Final attendance reports are reviewed at the end of the academic year to consider those cases where students have not met the attendance expectation for the full year. If a student has not met the attendance expectation for the year they may be placed on a supportive action plan at the start of the next academic year.

## 5. The Student Engagement & Support Through Studies Process

5.1. **Summary of Procedures:** There are four stages within the Student Engagement & Support Through Studies Policy:

- Stage 1 – Informal Raise of Concern
- Stage 2 - Initial or Emerging Concerns
- Stage 3 – Persistent or Significant Concerns
- Stage 4 – Highly Significant, Serious or Persistent Concern (Case Conference Panel)

### 5.2. Referring a student

5.2.1. The Student Engagement and Support Through Studies procedures can be instigated by any member of staff who has a sufficient level of concern about a student's health, safety and well-being. To refer a student, staff may notify the Student Support Manager or a member of the senior Management Team. To best facilitate the level of support a student may need, the formal procedures may be *entered at any stage* to allow the most flexibility, timeliness and appropriate intervention. However, where formal processes are entered into, it is expected that most cases will be resolved at Stage 2, with no need for progression to further stages of the process.

5.2.1.1. **Student Referral** - Concerns for the health or wellbeing of a student may also be raised by other students by approaching a member of staff. Students will not be expected to manage these situations themselves and should always raise concerns with a member of staff so that the matter can be referred as appropriate.

5.2.1.2. **Self-Referral** – Students concerned about their own wellbeing or ability to meet

the requirements of their studies are encouraged to speak with any member of staff who can then refer the matter to the Student Support Manager.

#### 5.2.2. Support for students going through this process

- 5.2.2.1. A student may be accompanied for support by a member of staff, fellow student or family member should they wish to any meeting at any stage within this policy.
- 5.2.2.2. It is possible that the use of any formal procedure may increase a student's stress levels, particularly if the role and purpose of the procedure is not understood. To minimise the risk of causing additional stress, these procedures should be used sensitively, ensuring that the focus on the student's best interests is explained to the student, and that all possible steps are taken to minimise additional concerns and anxieties experienced by the student.
- 5.2.2.3. Students should be involved in the management of their own health and wellbeing wherever possible. However, there may be occasions where a student is not able to, or does not engage with, these procedures. In these cases, the formal stages of the Support Through Studies process should still be applied and/or continue, to address concerns raised, advice being sought, and action being taken, as necessary and appropriate.

#### 5.3. Stage 1 – Informal Raise of Concern & Support Referral

- 5.3.1. **Stage 1** may be invoked by the School as appropriate to support a student who is identified as not meeting the expectations as laid out in this policy, particularly regarding engagement and attendance requirements.
- 5.3.2. Informal procedures may include for example an informal meeting with one or more staff. They may, if necessary, involve an Engagement Action Plan (see Appendix 2 'Student Engagement Action Plan').
- 5.3.3. Raise of Concern: If a student's attendance falls below 90%, without appropriate communication, mitigation or absence reporting for the **first** time, the Student Review Board (SRB) will issue the student with a **Raise of Concern**
  - 5.3.3.1. An attendance notification will be sent to the student highlighting that their attendance is below the expected threshold and the student will be referred to support mechanisms available to them.
  - 5.3.3.2. If concerns around attendance are raised by the student and/or tutors in response to the *Raise of Concern*, a meeting with the Student Support Manager will be offered, in which an informal **Student Engagement Action Plan** may be proposed.
  - 5.3.3.3. If the student's attendance remains below 90% subsequently and/or they continue to experience difficulties engaging with their studies or *Engagement Action Plan*, a decision may be made with the Student Support Manager to refer the student into the formal stages of the Support Through Studies process. At this stage, the case may be referred under Stage 2, Stage 3 or Stage 4 of the formal procedures, as deemed necessary. It should always be clear to the students which stage their case is being referred under. A report of attempts made to resolve the case informally should be made by the Student Support Manager and submitted for record purposes
- 5.3.4. Informal support will not necessarily be appropriate in all cases, for example if the level of concern about a student's engagement or wellbeing means that a *formal* stage of the Support Through Studies process should be initiated. Consideration will always be given



as to whether or not it is necessary to invoke formal procedures, however the decision to refer a student into any stage of the formal Support Through Studies procedures is made in the best interests of the student and to help the School ensure that the most appropriate level of support is in place.

#### **5.4. Stage 2: Emerging or Initial Concerns (Formal Procedure)**

5.4.1. The School will designate a 'Lead Contact' for the case. This will normally be the Student Support Manager or the Head of Under/Postgraduate Studies. The 'Lead Contact' will discuss all concerns with the student and will discuss strategies for resolving the situation, including any action needed by the student. The student may be accompanied for this conversation by another person for support, should they wish. A written record of the Stage 2 conversation and outcome should be kept.

5.4.2. The possible outcomes at Stage 2 in the process are:

- a. the matter is considered resolved and no further action is needed;
- b. a 'Support Through Studies action plan' (see Appendix 3) is agreed by the student and Lead Contact, which may include referral to additional support services and will articulate expected actions, outcomes and timelines;
- c. the matter is referred directly to the next stage, or, in serious cases, to Stage 4.

#### **5.5. Stage 3: Continuing and/or Significant Concerns**

5.5.1. If not already designated, the School will designate the 'Lead Contact' for the case.

5.5.2. The Lead Contact and another member of the senior staff of the School will have a meeting with the student which outlines the continuing problems. The focus of the meeting will be on finding an agreed strategy for managing the situation and a reasonable timeframe for seeing improvement. Notes of the meeting will be taken and circulated for confirmation (and where possible agreement) by the student normally within 48 hours of the Stage 3 meeting.

5.5.3. The possible outcomes at Stage 3 in the process are:

- a. a revised Support Through Studies action plan is agreed upon, which may include referral to support services. A specific date will be set for a review of the action plan; the review may result in the case continuing to be managed under Stage 3, being referred under Stage 1 or 2 of the procedure, or no further action, as deemed appropriate by the Lead Contact (who may reach this decision in consultation with relevant senior staff and/or support staff, as necessary);
- b. the student decides that they wish to interrupt studies and intermits for a period, with an agreed review of the case before recommencing to ensure they are fit to return. Conditions for the reintegration of a student returning to the course following intermission may be determined, as necessary, at any stage, in order to manage it flexibly and in the interests of the student and the requirements of the course;
- c. the student is made aware that if there is no improvement, the student may be withdrawn from the course and/or the matter escalated to the next stage;
- d. the Lead Contact and senior member of staff who have conducted the Stage 3 meeting determine there is a need to escalate the case to Stage 4 of the

procedure.

5.5.4. Where a strategy (including timeframes) for managing the situation cannot be agreed with the student, the matter should be referred to Stage 4 of the procedure. Where it is reasonable to do so, the Stage 3 meeting may be adjourned for a specific period to give the student time to think about various proposed options before reconvening to endeavour to reach an agreed strategy.

**5.6. Stage 4: Highly Significant, Serious or Persistent Concerns – Case Conference Panel**

5.6.1. If not already designated, the School will designate the 'Lead Contact' for the case.

5.6.2. If the case is considered to be of serious or critical concern (eg where the student is deemed to pose a danger either to themselves and/or to others), or if there has been no satisfactory resolution of the problem(s) or necessary change in behaviour, or if there has been prolonged absence and, after two weeks, the student has not formally reported an absence or expected return date and has not responded to communications from NSCD, the Lead Contact, with the agreement of a member of the School's Senior Management Team, will convene a Case Conference Panel.

5.6.3. The Panel will consider the student's case to determine whether the student may continue on the course, will be suspended for a period of time (through intermitting their training), or withdrawn from the course entirely. As far as possible, the process will endeavour to reach a decision with the agreement of the student, which may or may not include attendance at the Case Conference Panel meeting, however the School recognises that this may not always be possible.

5.6.4. If a student has declared a disability and has a Learning Agreement in place, the Case Conference Panel should consider whether all agreed reasonable adjustments articulated in the Learning Agreement have been made and take this into consideration in reaching a decision. The Cause for Concern form should indicate whether a Learning Agreement is in place.

5.6.5. The student must be notified of the meeting with sufficient notice (at least 5 working days) and informed of the attending members and the process that will be followed.

5.6.6. The student is entitled to submit a written statement for the panel to consider, which should outline the reasons for their absence or lack of resolution to the identified problem(s)/action plans, with supporting evidence where possible.

5.6.7. The student has the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, family member, or other person for support. They will also have the right to be accompanied by a representative, or to be represented in absentia, where there is good cause agreed by the Chair of the Case Conference Panel. The student should notify the Chair of the Case Conference Panel of the name(s) of any accompanying person(s), normally at least 48 hours in advance of the conference meeting. The Chair of the Panel has the ultimate discretion to allow or refuse any representative.

5.6.8. Deferrals to the meeting date will only be granted where the Chair of the Case Conference Panel is satisfied that reasonable grounds (e.g. illness, bereavement) exist to prevent the student from attending the meeting, and also that any risk to the student and/or the School community or other parties would, on the balance of probabilities, not be exacerbated by a deferral of the meeting. The Chair of the Case Conference Panel has the ultimate discretion to grant or refuse a request for a hearing to be deferred.

5.6.9. **Membership of the Panel:** A Case Conference Panel will comprise of at least 4 members including the Chair (Director of Studies or nominee), Secretary (from the Quality Office), senior academic staff (usually the Head of Faculty), and the Student Support Manager, or equivalent staff members in partner institutions.

- 5.6.10. The meeting should be conducted confidentially, and official minutes of the meeting will be recorded by the Secretary.
- 5.6.11. The panel should review any Support Through Studies Action Plans, Engagement Action Plans, the period/s of absence, the communication from NSCD to the student and records of the process followed to date (if applicable).
- 5.6.12. The student's statement and accompanying evidence should be presented if available, including details of any mitigating circumstances. Upon review of the above, the Panel should conclude whether the student should:
- a. Be allowed to continue on their programme on an agreed Support Through Studies Action Plan at an earlier stage of the process.
  - b. Offered options such as Intermission of studies for a specific period of time.
  - c. Be withdrawn from their programme of study and awarded credits achieved, where applicable.
- 5.6.13. Where the Panel has agreed that a student can continue with their studies on a new Support Through Studies Action Plan, the plan will specify a review point, after which a further Panel may be convened if further action is required.
- 5.6.14. The Quality Office must inform the student of the Panel decision and appeal process, within 5 working days. All documents relating to the case should be made available to the student at this point.
- 5.6.15. The Quality Office and partner institutions must report intermissions and withdrawals as a result of the Case Conference Panel to the Board of Examiners and included on the Student Cases Log.
- 5.6.16. In accordance with the Equality Act (2010), in determining the agreed action the Case Conference Panel will take into account whether there are any reasonable adjustments that can be put in place, or whether the limits of reasonableness have been reached at that time.

## 5.7. Procedural integrity and fairness

- 5.7.1. Integrity and fairness are at the heart of all the School's procedures. NSCD has a number of close links with similar small specialist arts higher education providers. We recognise that there may be times where the involvement in our processes and procedures of one or more individuals who are fully independent of NSCD may be of benefit to students, providing assurances against bias and prejudice, and giving independent oversight of our procedures and processes. This oversight also helps to ensure fairness and reasonableness.
- 5.7.2. Individuals who are not NSCD staff will not normally be involved in *informal* Student Engagement & Support Through Studies processes and procedures, although they may be in reasonable circumstances (for example, it may be appropriate to involve a guest lecturer in an informal conversation with a student to enhance the support for that student).
- 5.7.3. Individuals who are not NSCD staff will not hold overall responsibility for the application and operation of Support Through Studies formal procedures. The School will in all circumstances ensure that a member of School staff with appropriate expertise and authority holds this responsibility, and will be sufficiently involved to assure the procedures are properly followed and that action taken is fair, reasonable and proportionate. Such members of School staff may be professional services or learning and teaching staff.

- 5.7.4. **Mediation:** The School recognises that students who undergo Support Through Studies procedures will do so for a variety of reasons, and that working relationships may at times suffer some strain as a result. Where appropriate, the School may determine that mediation outside of this process is appropriate and feasible, and mediation to resolve differences can be entered into at any point during these procedures. Mediation cannot however be used to replace a formal Case Conference decision or Support Through Studies Appeal Panel decision.

## 6. Legal Framework

- 6.1. This policy will be managed in accordance with NSCD's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (May 2018) and the Equality Act 2010 and will be applied in accordance with our obligations for data protection and student confidentiality.
- 6.2. To ensure appropriate levels of confidentiality, advice on whether to invoke these procedures at any stage should initially be sought without disclosing details of the student concerned, i.e. on an anonymous basis, where this is practicable. Advice may be sought from School Student Support staff and the Quality Office.
- 6.3. The School will seek to do all within its power to limit the disclosure of information involving any case where a student is referred under these procedures, as is consistent with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and the Data Protection Act (1998). It is essential, however, that relevant parties are kept informed as and when necessary and are notified accordingly of any directives or sanctions arising from proceedings under this Policy, therefore the scope of disclosure will by necessity vary from case to case. Information must be restricted to a 'need to know' basis to those persons who in operating these procedures the School deems necessary to be informed.
- 6.4. NSCD will, in the fair and proper operation of the Student Engagement & Support Through Studies procedures, confidentially share student information with external staff (see also section 2 of this policy 'Procedural integrity and fairness' for further information).

### 6.5. Data retention

- 6.5.1. In accordance with the School's duties under the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and the Data Protection Act (2018) and in keeping with OIA recommendations, records will be retained for a minimum of 15 months and for no longer than is reasonably necessary (i.e. no longer than 6 years after the final action on the student's case, at which point the individual student file will be destroyed). Some deviation from this schedule can be expected for cases which, in the judgement of the School, are unique or complex and therefore require shorter or longer record retention periods.
- 6.5.2. Notwithstanding the above normal retention schedule, the Case Conference Panel (see Stage 4 of the procedures) will have the discretion to indicate a specific point in the future, and the conditions under which, any records pertaining to action taken under this Policy regarding a student may be removed from the student's file.

### 6.6. Student consent to sharing sensitive information

- 6.6.1. Where a student discloses sensitive information and does not wish to share this information with anyone else within the School, it is important that the staff member receiving the disclosure makes the student aware that the capacity to provide support may be restricted or limited by this non-disclosure.

- 6.6.2. Acting within the Law, the School will seek the student's informed consent before disclosing sensitive information and consider the student's best interests before disclosing information to a third party. The exception to this is where the disclosure of confidential information by a student leads a staff member to have reasonable belief that the student may be at serious risk to themselves and/or others, in the interests of safeguarding, or where there is a legal obligation to disclose this information (e.g. in the prevention of crime) as this may justify and necessitate the disclosure of this information (see Section 7.5).
- 6.6.3. However, a student may decide that they do consent to this information being shared with individuals who are external to the School for the purposes of formal procedures. Where staff external to the School are involved in procedures, this sensitive information will not be shared with them without the consent of the student unless there is a lawful, reasonable and justifiable reason.

### **6.7. Necessary disclosure of personal sensitive information to manage risk under this Policy**

- 6.7.1. Where the disclosure of confidential information by a student leads a staff member to have reasonable belief that the student may be at serious risk to themselves and/or others, this may justify and necessitate within the Law the disclosure of this information. The student's consent should still be sought if practicable, and any reasons given for refusal given fair consideration. If a student's refusal to consent to disclosure leaves them and/or others exposed to a risk so serious that it outweighs the student's interest in maintaining confidentiality, or if it is not practicable or safe to seek the student's consent, the staff member concerned should disclose the information to an appropriate senior member of School staff, who will review whether it is necessary to contact the student's 'Emergency Contact' given at the point of registration. If practicable and safe, the student should be notified prior to disclosing the information, even where the staff member intends to disclose without the student's consent.

### **6.8. Third party disclosure**

- 6.8.1. The School will normally seek the student's consent to provide information to third parties involved in any aspect of their education (including with placement providers or external course-related activities), unless there is a need to make a necessary disclosure (see Section 6.7). Where a student does not give consent, this may mean that reasonable adjustments or alternative arrangements arising from any needs cannot be put in place. If it is not possible for alternative arrangements to be made, the student's placement/activity may be withdrawn, and deferral<sup>2</sup>, adjusted assessment points or other adjustments considered.
- 6.8.2. Where a student's studies are interrupted, intermitted, or in the case of any necessary deferral of assessment or other adjustment affecting assessment being brought under this procedure, the School may, as necessary and in accordance with the validating university's academic regulations, be required to report this to the validating university.

## **7. Related Documents**

- 7.1. The Student Engagement & Support Through Studies Policy should be distinguished from other

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<sup>2</sup> Deferrals of assessment can only be granted by the Board of Examiners. Where deferral of assessment is considered, the School must contact the relevant Board of Examiners to make this request on behalf of the student before it may be authorised.

School policies such as those listed below. All student facing policies can be found on the School website at <https://www.nscd.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures/>

- 7.1.1. **Criminal Records Policy:** an assessment of criminal records information may result in a referral into Support Through Studies to ensure appropriate support for a student, but that assessment process is independent of this Policy and does not form any part of the procedures under this Policy
  - 7.1.2. **Emergency Powers of Suspension of a Student:** In exceptional circumstances, the Emergency Powers of Suspension of a Student may be involved under these procedures.
  - 7.1.3. **Interruption of Studies Policy:** when a student requests temporary interruption to their studies on the course owing to ill health or personal circumstances.
  - 7.1.4. **Mitigating/Extenuating Circumstances:** when a student is unable to participate in a specific assessment owing to ill health or personal circumstances. These are often referred to as 'concessions'.
  - 7.1.5. **Non-Academic Misconduct Policy:** when a student may have formal sanctions applied to them owing to conduct which falls within the definitions of misconduct in the policy, and/or a contravention of the published School Student Codes of Practice.
  - 7.1.6. **Policy on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Related Behaviours:** this policy underpins the School's procedures for handling cases of sexual misconduct, harassment and related offences.
  - 7.1.7. **Safeguarding Policy:** NSCD has a safeguarding policy that relates to vulnerable students. This policy will be operated with due regard to the Safeguarding Policy.
- 7.2. The School reserves the right to initiate procedures under this Policy where appropriate, and/or procedures under any of the above policies where appropriate. Any procedures relating to the above policies may as necessary be held in abeyance whilst the procedures under this Policy are ongoing. Equally, the procedures under this Policy may be held in abeyance if the School deems it necessary to instigate/invoke other procedures in the meantime. This policy and its procedures may run alongside other ongoing processes, or held in abeyance, whichever the School deems to be most appropriate and in the best interests of the student and the wider community of the School.

## 8. Right of appeal/complaint against a decision made under these procedures

- 8.1. Following a decision by the Student Engagement & Support through Studies Panel taken under Stage 4 of the formal procedures within this policy, the student has the right of appeal against that decision. Full details of the Appeal process can be found in Appendix 4.
- 8.2. Where a student wishes to make a complaint about any other aspect of the Student Engagement & Support Through Studies procedures, the [Student Complaints Procedure](#) should be used.