

The British University in Egypt

Fitness to Study Process

Key Policy Information:

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Key Responsible Office:	Office of the Provost
Approved by (committee):	UTLC and Senate
Responsibility for Document Review:	Academic Governance Office
Date Created/First Draft	September 2026
Date Approved:	October 2026
Date Last updated:	October 2026
Date of next review	September 2028

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The British University in Egypt

Fitness to Study Process

Purpose

This document provides the practical process for managing Fitness to Study concerns at BUE.

The process is based on four principles:

Identify early → Understand the circumstances → Support and monitor → Escalate proportionately where necessary

Fitness to Study is a **supportive process, not a disciplinary process**.

FITNESS TO STUDY PROCESS

STEP 1 – A CONCERN IS IDENTIFIED

A concern may be identified by:

- Academic staff
- Personal Tutor
- Programme Leader
- Dean / Vice Dean
- Student Support and Wellbeing Team
- Academic Services
- Student Support and Wellbeing Team
- Placement provider
- Student
- Other appropriate University staff

Possible concerns include:

- significant change in behaviour;
- physical or mental health concerns;
- wellbeing concerns;
- repeated absence;
- inability to engage with study;
- significant deterioration in academic performance;
- concern for the student's safety;
- concern for the safety of others; or
- difficulty participating safely in programme or placement activities.

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STEP 2 – IS THERE AN IMMEDIATE AND SIGNIFICANT RISK?

YES

Prioritise immediate safety.

Use the appropriate emergency, medical, safeguarding, security or professional response.

Do not delay an urgent response while commencing the Fitness to Study process.

Once the immediate situation has been managed, consider whether Fitness to Study intervention is required.

NO

Proceed to early intervention.



STEP 3 – EARLY / INFORMAL INTERVENTION

The appropriate member of staff:

1. meets or communicates with the student;
2. explains the concern;
3. listens to the student's perspective;
4. identifies relevant circumstances;
5. considers academic support and reasonable adjustments;
6. refers counselling, mental health or wellbeing concerns to the Student Support and Wellbeing Team where appropriate; and
7. agrees appropriate next steps.

Important

Academic and professional staff should not provide counselling or specialist mental-health or wellbeing intervention outside their professional competence.

Where the issue concerns counselling, mental health or wellbeing, the student should be referred to the Student Support and Wellbeing Team, which operates under the responsibility of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for the Student Journey.



STEP 4 – CAN THE CONCERN BE MANAGED INFORMALLY?

YES

Agree an informal support plan.

The plan should identify:

- concern;
- support required;
- responsibilities;
- reasonable adjustments;
- monitoring arrangements;
- review date.



MONITOR



Has the concern been resolved?

YES → CLOSE / CONTINUE NORMAL SUPPORT

NO → CONSIDER STAGE 2

STAGE 2 – FORMAL FITNESS TO STUDY CASE CONFERENCE

Stage 2 may be appropriate where:

- informal support has not worked;
- concerns are persistent or worsening;
- the student has not engaged with support;
- several University services need to coordinate intervention;
- there is significant impact on study;
- significant safety concerns remain; or
- the circumstances require formal institutional consideration.



CASE CONFERENCE

The Case Conference should normally involve appropriate representatives from:

Academic / Faculty

- Dean / nominee
- Programme Leader / academic representative

Academic Services

- appropriate Academic Services representative

Student Support and Wellbeing

- appropriate Student Support and Wellbeing representative

Other specialist support

- Disability / reasonable-adjustment support or other relevant professional service where appropriate



STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The student should normally:

- receive information about the concerns;
- have reasonable notice of the meeting;
- be given an opportunity to explain their circumstances;
- provide relevant evidence;

- identify support requirements; and
- participate in developing the support plan.

The student has the right to be accompanied by one person of their choice, in accordance with the Fitness to Study Policy.

The companion may be a friend, family member, fellow student, Students' Union representative, or appropriate member of University staff.

The Chair may restrict the companion's participation where necessary to keep the meeting focused, fair and respectful or to protect confidentiality.



CASE CONFERENCE OUTCOME

A. Continue with support

Develop a formal Fitness to Study Support Plan.

B. Continue with conditions

Set clear and proportionate conditions for continued participation.

C. Break in Studies / Suspension of Studies

Apply the University's Break in Studies / Suspension of Studies policy and agree appropriate return arrangements.

D. Escalate

Refer the matter to a Fitness to Study Panel where concerns remain unresolved or sufficiently serious.



MONITOR AND REVIEW

If the student remains on study:

- monitor agreed actions;
- review progress;
- adjust support where appropriate;
- consider whether further intervention is required.



Has the concern been satisfactorily addressed?

YES → CONTINUE STUDY WITH APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

NO → STAGE 3

STAGE 3 – FITNESS TO STUDY PANEL

A Panel may be required where:

- significant concerns remain;
- support has not been effective;
- the student has disengaged;

- significant risk remains;
- continuation of study requires formal consideration; or
- circumstances are sufficiently serious.

A Panel may also be convened directly where the seriousness of the circumstances warrants this.



STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The student should normally be invited to attend, be informed of the concerns and evidence to be considered, and be given a reasonable opportunity to explain their circumstances and provide relevant information.

The student has the right to be accompanied by one person of their choice, in accordance with the Fitness to Study Policy.

The companion may be a friend, family member, fellow student, Students' Union representative, or appropriate member of University staff.

The Chair may restrict the companion's participation where necessary to keep the meeting focused, fair and respectful or to protect confidentiality.



PANEL CONSIDERATION

The Panel considers:

- the concerns;
- evidence;
- the student's perspective;
- support already provided;
- reasonable adjustments;
- relevant professional information;
- academic requirements;
- risks;
- possible alternatives to a Break in Studies / Suspension of Studies; and
- the student's prospects of continuing or returning safely to study.



PANEL OUTCOMES

CONTINUE STUDY

with:

- normal arrangements; or
- additional support.

CONTINUE STUDY WITH CONDITIONS

with a formal support and monitoring plan.

BREAK IN STUDIES / SUSPENSION OF STUDIES

Apply the University's Break in Studies / Suspension of Studies policy, with an agreed Return to Study plan.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION (WHERE APPLICABLE)

Used only where necessary and proportionate and in accordance with the relevant University policy.

EXCEPTIONAL TERMINATION

Only where continuation cannot reasonably be supported.

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RETURN TO STUDY

A Break in Studies / Suspension of Studies will usually be for one full academic year and may not usually exceed two academic years, in line with the Fitness to Study Policy.

Where a student has taken a Break in Studies / Suspension of Studies because of Fitness to Study concerns:

1. Review circumstances

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2. Consider appropriate evidence

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3. Hold a Return to Study meeting

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4. Agree support and reasonable adjustments

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5. Agree conditions, responsibilities and monitoring period

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6. Confirm return arrangements in writing

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7. Student returns to study and progress is reviewed

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8. Continue / amend support as required

GOVERNANCE AT A GLANCE

Responsibility	Primary role
Provost	Owner of Fitness to Study Policy; academic and governance oversight
Deputy Vice Chancellor for the Student Journey	Oversight of the Student Support and Wellbeing function
Student Support and Wellbeing Team	Counselling, wellbeing support, student meetings concerning wellbeing and appropriate professional referrals

Academic Services	Procedural coordination, records, formal meetings and panels; documentation and communication of decisions and actions
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Faculties	Identify concerns, provide academic support and implement agreed arrangements
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Student	Participate in support and provide relevant information where reasonably able
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Core principle

The University should seek to understand the concern before determining the intervention.

The existence of a health or wellbeing difficulty does not in itself mean that a student is unfit to study.

The objective is to provide appropriate support, maintain academic and professional standards, protect students and staff, and enable the student to continue or safely return to study wherever reasonably possible.