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GBS Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure

Global Banking School

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Approved by (Oversight committee)	Academic Board
Policy lead (Staff member accountable)	Head of Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding
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Related GBS policies

- GBS Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy - Students
- GBS Student Charter
- GBS Student Wellbeing Policy
- GBS Equality and Diversity Policy
- GBS Safeguarding Policy
- GBS Reasonable Adjustments

External Reference Points

1. Equality Act 2010, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> The policy has been informed by the Equality Act 2010 consolidated, simplified, strengthened and replaced previous legislation, consolidating equality legislation with respect to nine protected characteristics.
2. [UK Quality Code for Higher Education \(2024\)](#)
3. Data Protection Act 2018 controls how your personal information is used by organisations, businesses, or the government please see [Information Commissioners website.](#)

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. This policy outlines the framework used when concerns are raised regarding a learner's health, wellbeing or behaviour, and the extent to which these may impact on ability to engage safely and effectively in their study. These concerns may relate to a learner's own academic progress, the learning experience of others, safeguarding, or situations that place unreasonable pressure on staff or fellow learners.
- 1.2. This policy ensures that concerns are addressed in a fair, transparent, and supportive manner, with the aim of enabling students to continue their studies wherever possible through agreed, appropriate interventions, guidance, and reasonable adjustments.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a structured and supportive framework for addressing concerns about a learner's ability to engage safely, effectively, and consistently in their studies due to health, wellbeing, or behavioural factors. The policy ensures that concerns are identified early, assessed appropriately, and managed in a fair and transparent manner. GBS seeks to maintain an environment which is safe and conducive to teaching, learning, study, and well-being.
- 2.2. This Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure is designed to allow an agreed way for the learner to continue their studies with appropriate support or to take a break from their studies, without academic consequences, until the learner is deemed fit to return to study.
- 2.3. The aim is to promote academic success and wellbeing for every learner, through timely support and intervention, whilst providing clear procedures for staff and learners, ensuring consistency and accountability in how concerns are managed.
- 2.4. GBS has a responsibility to ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for staff and learners. In circumstances where a learner may be unable to recognise or communicate a deterioration in their health or wellbeing, this policy enables GBS to intervene in the best interests of the learner and the wider GBS community. The Fitness to Study procedure may be initiated even in cases where no formal health condition has been diagnosed, or where GBS has not been informed of an existing diagnosis, if

concerns arise regarding a student's ability to engage safely and effectively in their studies.

3. Scope

- 3.1. The scope of this policy is to outline the circumstances in which concerns about a learner's health, wellbeing or behaviour may require formal intervention. It defines how GBS will respond to ensure the safety, engagement and success of all students.
- 3.2. The Policy is relevant to all academic staff, professional services, wellbeing, safeguarding and senior management. Any member of staff who identifies a concern regarding a learner may initiate the process.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. GBS defines Fitness to Study as the ability to participate appropriately, effectively and consistently as a learner and member of school community, without adversely affecting their own wellbeing or that of others.
- 4.2. Supporting a learner to study is non-disciplinary process used to explore concerns raised about a learner's wellbeing, behaviour or academic performance, to identify interventions or actions that may help the learner continue with their studies successfully.
- 4.3. Reasonable Adjustments are modifications or interventions provided to learners with disabilities, health conditions, or specific learning differences, in line with the Equality Act 2010, to ensure they have equal access to education.
- 4.4. Wellbeing concern is any information or observation indicating that a learner's physical or mental health may be affecting their safety, behaviour, participation, academic engagement, or overall functioning.
- 4.5. Safeguarding Concern is a concern indicating a learner may be at risk of harm, exploitation, abuse, or neglect. Such concerns are managed under the GBS Safeguarding Policy but may also intersect with Fitness to Study processes.

- 4.6. Intervention describes any action taken by GBS to address a concern for a learner, which may include meetings, referrals to external support services, temporary learning adjustments, or escalation to a higher stage of the Fitness to Study process.

5. Principles

- 5.1. The process is designed to support learners who are experiencing health problems, not progressing academically, safeguarding concerns or wellbeing difficulties. It is not a disciplinary procedure, as the focus is on enabling learners to continue their studies safely and effectively wherever possible.
- 5.2. Concerns should be identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity, to prevent escalation, minimise disruption, and ensure timely access to support.
- 5.3. The learner's wellbeing, needs, and individual circumstances are central to all decisions made. Learners are encouraged to participate in discussions and decisions relating to their support for continuation of studies.
- 5.4. All learners will be treated with respect, fairness and sensitivity, regardless of their background, protected characteristics or mode of study.
- 5.5. GBS has a duty of care to safeguard and protect the wider school community. The policy ensures that the safety and wellbeing of other learners and staff are considered when concerns are raised.
- 5.6. The process may involve collaborative working across departments, academic teams, and support services to ensure informed and holistic decision making.
- 5.7. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments and agreed support will be explored in line with the Equality Act 2010 to remove barriers to learning
- 5.8. All information will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation. Only relevant staff will be informed of the concerns raised and this will be solely for identified staff and departments.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. The Provost holds overall responsibility for the management, implementation, and effective operation of this Fitness to Study Policy and its associated procedures. All members of staff share responsibility for acting in accordance with this policy framework, including when a learner raises a significant concern directly with them or self-refers for support. Staff are expected to respond appropriately, follow the outlined procedures, and ensure concerns are directed to the relevant departments in a timely manner

6.2. Learner:

- Engage positively with the Fitness to Study process, including attending meetings and providing relevant information when requested.
- Make use of support services and reasonable adjustments offered to them
- Communicate any significant changes in their health, wellbeing, or personal circumstances that may impact their studies

6.3. Academic staff:

- Identify early signs of concern relating to a student's ability to engage in their studies
- Record and report their concern to the Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding Team promptly
- Participate in Fitness to Study meetings when required and implement agreed academic adjustments
- Senior academic staff should support their team in managing learner concerns effectively, ensuring they are aware of their responsibilities within this Policy

6.4. Wellbeing and Safeguarding:

- Head of Student Wellbeing and Safeguarding oversee implementation of the policy across campuses to ensure consistency and compliance.
- Review complex cases and determine next steps, in line with this Policy, including referral to higher stages.
- Where there is risk of harm or immediate concern, make decisions regarding temporary suspension, return-to-study plans, or adjustments where appropriate.
- External agencies may be consulted if there are safeguarding concerns, mental health crises or risk of harm

6.5. Senior Management:

- Senior Management to provide oversight for high-risk cases and those escalated to stage 3
- Approve conditions where continuation of study poses significant risk

6.6. Procedures: Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3

Stage 1 - Initial concern

- Purpose of stage 1 is to respond to concerns, offering supportive intervention aimed at preventing escalation and promoting academic engagement.
- Stage 1 may be initiated by any staff member who raises a concern relating to a learner's health, behaviour, engagement or overall wellbeing.
- Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding Team reviews the concern and determines if stage 1 is the appropriate response
- The learner is invited to an informal meeting to discuss concerns raised, explore any current challenges, identify available support and implement adjustments if appropriate.
- An action plan can be implemented, which could include referral to external agencies. The action plan will detail expected improvements and outcomes confirmed in writing.
- Case will remain open and monitored for the duration of the action plan. If concerns persist or the learner does not engage, stage 2 or stage 3 of the process may occur
- Possible outcomes:
 - No further action
 - Agreed support plan
 - Referral to external agencies
 - Escalation to stage 2 or stage 3

Stage 2 – Serious concerns, formal case review

- Stage 2 is used to formally address ongoing concerns that have not been resolved at stage 1, or when or when the learner's conduct indicates substantial impact on themselves or others
- Stage 2 is initiated where concerns remain unresolved, engagement is limited, or risk factors increase.

- A formal written invitation will be sent to the learner, requesting attendance at a case review meeting
- Meeting is chaired by Head of Student Wellbeing and may include academic representatives
- The learner can be accompanied by a chosen member of staff, colleague, family member or friend
- The meeting will review previous and current concerns, examine progress from stage 1 if appropriate, assess current risk levels, and identify barriers to engagement.
- Possible outcomes:
 - Learner continues with an adjusted, enhanced support plan
 - Referral to external agencies
 - Escalation to stage 3 where risks remain high or learner engagement is poor

Stage 3 – Senior Case Review & Fitness to continue

- Purpose of stage 3 is to determine through a Senior Review Panel, if a learner remains fit to study, and consider serious, ongoing or high-risk concerns.
- Stage 3 is initiated by Head of Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding or Senior Management, where there is evidence of significant ongoing risk, the learner has not engaged with agreed support or when previous interventions have been unsuccessful.
- A formal written letter is issued to the learner, explaining the rationale for the Senior Review Panel
- The panel may include the Provost, Senior Academic Leaders and Head of Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding
- The learner can be accompanied by a chosen member of staff, colleague, family member or friend
- The panel will review evidence from previous stages, consider medical reports (if appropriate), assess risk to the wider school community, and determine whether the learner can continue with their studies safely.
- Possible outcomes:
 - Learner continues with strict conditions
 - Temporary suspension or interruption of studies

- Mandatory engagement with support services, which could include external agencies
- A formal return-to-study review before being re-enrolled
- Termination of studies

Urgent cases

- In exceptional circumstances where there are clear and immediate risks to the health, safety, or wellbeing of the learner or others within the GBS community, a Stage 3 may be initiated immediately. In such cases, the process may proceed without prior engagement from the learner in order to manage risk and ensure the safety of all parties.

6.7. Communication

- 6.7.1. All decisions are confirmed in writing, and records retained securely in accordance with GDPR responsibilities.

7. Policy Amendment and Administration

- 7.1. This policy may be amended by GBS at any time. If there are any queries relating to policy administration, please contact the Governance Team at governance@globalbanking.ac.uk.

8. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- 8.1. GBS is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as a Data Controller. Details of the School's registration are published on the [Information Commissioner's website](#). GBS as a Data Controller implements appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure that processing of personal information is performed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

9. Alternative Format

- 9.1. This policy can be provided in alternative formats (including large print, audio and electronic) upon request. For further information, or to make a request, please contact the Governance Team at governance@globalbanking.ac.uk.