



# Centre for Alternative Technology Fitness to Study and Engage in the Student Experience Policy

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## 1. Introduction - Scope and Purpose

- 1.1. The Graduate School of the Environment (GSE) at the Centre of Alternative Technology (CAT) takes the health, safety, and well-being of all students seriously and seeks to provide an environment that is safe and conducive to study. In this context, CAT has a duty of care to respond appropriately where there are substantial concerns relating to a student's health and wellbeing and reserves the right to assess whether the student is fit to continue study at that time. Details of how CAT provides services for students, including support for students with mental or physical health needs can be found on this link: [GSE Student Support and Welfare Services](#)
- 1.2. However, CAT recognises the pressures of study, finance and family life can be a challenging experience and provides a wide range of support for students to enable them to succeed there may be circumstances where due to the result of an underlying physical and/or mental health difficulty and/or other issues, a student is unable to effectively engage with their studies and/or they are causing disruption, concern and distress for themselves and to others. The student may be unable to see the need for, or the benefit of, taking a leave of absence, or to recognise that they are not fit to study at that time.
- 1.3. The policy is intended to be supportive, to assist the student to maintain academic progress and their relationship with the GSE. Its intention is to help the student engage in appropriate support (determined by the health difficulty) in order to bring their behaviour in line with the expectations described in the [Student Charter](#) and provide the best chance for the student to succeed
- 1.4. Where a student is also a member of staff, HR will be consulted to determine the most appropriate procedure for consideration of any concerns raised.
- 1.5. Where relevant and appropriate to do so, CAT may consider a student's conduct or engagement based on their Fitness to Study rather than through the Student Disciplinary Procedures.
- 1.6. If appropriate, CAT may consider concerns under other procedures such as the [Student Charter](#) or [Student Disciplinary Procedures](#).
- 1.7. Where a student has not positively responded to or engaged in supportive interventions, or where the GSE has deemed the student unfit to study, CAT may withdraw a student from their programme of study.
- 1.8. CAT also reserves the right to discuss support pathways and fitness to study with applicants.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1. CAT defines fitness to study and engage in the student experience as a student's ability to fully participate, engage and benefit from study in academic, residential and community environments (with or without additional support). The Fitness to Study procedure may be applied to any student, at any stage of their study. It does not apply to applicants who are yet to be offered a place at CAT or those who have been offered a place but have not yet enrolled for their study.
- 2.2. The procedure may be applied where:
  - A student poses a risk to their own health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of others because of an underlying physical or mental health problem
  - They are unable to engage effectively with and benefit from the programme of study or research for the required duration of the programme. This affects their reasonable chance in obtaining the academic outcome for which they are enrolled.

- A student's behaviour is (or is at risk of) adversely affecting the teaching, learning and/or experience of fellow students and staff or the spirit of studying, and working co-operatively and in close proximity with others
- Their behaviour (including their communications, or interactions) or mental and physical needs disrupts members of the GSE community to the extent that the disruption has a detrimental impact upon members of the CAT or its wider community. This includes the learning, research and work of other students, the experience of other students and the demands placed on staff.
- The student has behaved in any other way that would otherwise be dealt with as a disciplinary matter, but evidence (from an internal or external source) has been provided to show that the student's behaviour may be the result of an underlying physical (e.g. serious long term health issue) or mental health problem linked to their Fitness to Study.
- The student's behaviour, appearance or demeanour presents a serious concern or risk to themselves or others and/or CAT's reputation

2.3. Students may be deemed unfit to study under this policy where:

- Where a student is unable to engage with studies due to a health condition or it is not in their interest or that of CAT or other students that an applicant should commence a programme of study, or the student should continue a programme of study.
- There is progressive or sudden deterioration in a student's engagement, quality of work, demeanour, or behaviour
- Where adjustments and support for disabling conditions or long-term mental or physical health issues are not sufficient or appropriate,
- Where a student is unable to or chooses not to engage with adjustments and support offered.
- CAT judges (based on clinical evidence) that continuation is detrimental to the student's health.
- That a student's presentation is disruptive in a way that significantly impacts on the study and well-being of others at CAT
- That a student's conduct, behaviour or health and well-being presents a risk to themselves and others, or places unreasonable demands on staff, students and others.

### 3. Expectations

All adults are presumed to have sufficient capacity to decide on their own medical treatment, unless there's significant evidence to suggest otherwise. CAT expects students to be able to:

- Understand their own health and safety and that of others.
- Understand the risk of physical danger to themselves and others.
- Communicate effectively with fellow students, staff and other professionals
- Undertake periods in private study without supervision [but using appropriate support mechanisms].
- Attend and engage effectively in lectures and tutorials, with physical and study support adjustments as necessary.
- Submit coursework within required academic timescales.
- Undertake assessment and engage effectively with the assessment process, with appropriate adjustments.

- Be proactive in engaging with relevant support services.

## 4. Operating Principles

- 4.1. All information provided regarding fitness to study will remain confidential for use within the procedure and is subject to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations and CATs [Privacy Policy](#). Only staff directly involved in the procedure will be given access to confidential information.
- 4.2. CAT aims to ensure consistency and sensitivity in these matters; decisions will be reached through a team approach and following consultation and advice from relevant individuals. The student's views will form part of the consideration as will an assessment of their ability to learn, study and interact with the GSE community.
- 4.3. Where a student is hospitalised or sectioned for any period of time, consideration will be given to how best to support the student effectively and this may include consideration under the Fitness to Study procedure.
- 4.4. CAT may wish, with the individuals consent, to contact their GP or other relevant medical practitioners for evidence of health status and / or means of support. **Note the exception in Section 7 Stage 3 – Immediate or Critical Concerns.**
- 4.5. In general, it is better for all if adverse behaviours due to a student's health or disability are recognised prior to the need for formal intervention. If there are emerging concerns about a student's behaviour these should be addressed at an informal, local level as described in section 5. Stage 1 – Emerging/Initial concerns.
- 4.6. Where a student presents with significant concerns, including hospitalisation, the matter may be escalated directly to Stage 3 of the Fitness to Study procedure without passing through the intermediate stages.

## 5. Stage 1 – Emerging/Initial concerns

- 5.1. Any student may raise a concern about their own fitness to study, and any student or member of CAT staff may raise an informal concern about a student's health, safety, well-being or behaviour. This could be directly observed, reported by a third party or possibly suggested by the reactions, general presentation or demeanour of the student.
- 5.2. Whilst students can raise concerns, they will not be expected to manage these situations and should always approach a member of staff.
- 5.3. Personal Tutors, Academic Staff and Programme Leaders are the staff members most likely to identify that a student is experiencing difficulties and will be provided with training, support and advice from Student Support to enable them to initially manage the situation using this procedure.
- 5.4. Staff can either approach the student in an empathetic and non-confrontational manner to try and ascertain the issue, or alternatively should suggest to the student that they contact Student Support, their tutor or the Employee Assistance Programme team for support.
- 5.5. If the member of staff talks to the student themselves, they should outline their concerns to the student and offer to assist with referring the student to the Additional Learning Needs Team. Where applicable, staff should advise on any relevant processes for example leave of absence / period of intermission or Exceptional Circumstances procedure. Staff should record any verbal advice given to students on such matters for example via a follow up email, to ensure that there is a record if the matter is escalated. The student should be asked to moderate their behaviour or to seek help with presenting issues.

- 5.6. If the student responds positively, there may be no need for further action. If the student does not respond positively, refuses to co-operate and/or where the staff member believes the student is presenting significant concerns, the member of staff should contact Student Support in the first instance for advice. Where the Student Support Manager or Additional Learning Needs coordinator feels it is appropriate to investigate a student's fitness, this may include progression to stage 2 or 3 of this procedure (dependant on circumstances).

## 6. Stage 2 – Continuing Concerns

- 6.1. If a student's health, safety, well-being, or behaviour continues to cause concern, staff should complete the referral form (see appendix), noting their concerns and that the referral is being made under Stage 2 of the Fitness to Study Procedures. The Referral Form is available as an Appendix to this document. Following initial review, the Head of School (or nominee) will liaise with relevant staff to consider the circumstances of the case and to agree on an appropriate course of action within the scope of this procedure. This may include, but is not limited to:
  - a) Inviting the student to attend an initial assessment with an appropriate member of the ALN team. Issues facing the student and the student's perception of their actions will be discussed and assessed within a confidential assessment environment,
  - b) Agreeing a Student Wellness Action Plan (WAP) with the student; this may include accessing internal support and/or referral to relevant external services. The WAP will also include agreed review dates. The student will be advised of the possible consequences of not adhering to the WAP. This may include further discussion and the potential for referral to Stage 3 of the fitness to study procedure.
  - c) Advising the student of options available to them which might include a leave of absence, deferral or withdrawal from the programme. Students should be advised or referred to relevant advice services about the financial implications of any such actions. CAT will re-assess a student's fitness to study when a student requests to resume their study, following a leave of absence or deferral.
- 6.2. Notification of an intention to resume a programme of study should be made in the first instance to Student Support ([student.support@cat.org.uk](mailto:student.support@cat.org.uk))

## 7. Stage 3 – Immediate or Critical Concerns

- 7.1. In a situation where it is believed that a student's behaviour presents an immediate and critical safeguarding risk to themselves or others at the CAT site, the Emergency Services and CAT reception should be contacted immediately. The level of risk must be judged based on the risk to the student concerned as well as the impact on other students, staff or visitors to the CAT site. The Head of School or a member of the CAT Senior Management Team (ideally on site at the time of the incident) should then be notified of the details of the incident and any action taken. The person witnessing the student's behaviour should not leave the site until they have briefed the emergency services.
- 7.2. In a situation where there is an immediate safeguarding concern, where the student is *non compos mentis* and/or unable to give verbal consent but is presenting a danger to themselves or others, CAT will make contact with either the Trusted Friend or Next of Kin details that were provided during enrolment consent. In a safeguarding situation such as

this CAT will assume that providing Trusted Friend or Next of Kin Details is assumed consent.

- 7.3. Equally, where there are immediate and serious concerns regarding a student's fitness to study and/ or where the student's health, safety, well-being or behaviour continues to cause concern and/or the student fails to engage with a WAP, the matter may be escalated to Stage 3 of the procedure wither when the student is on site or at a remote location, such as their home.
- 7.4. It is recognised that in situations such as this, supporting students where there is major concern can be difficult to manage and that the level of risk is often hard to determine. The Health and Safety of others at the CAT site should also be actively considered, so their level of risk is minimised.
- 7.5. In this situation staff the student's wellbeing is of paramount importance and if a cause for concern conversation has been instigated can make a direct referral to Student Support, or Additional Learning Needs Team. Staff should contact Student Support and Head of School via email at [Student.Support@cat.org.uk](mailto:Student.Support@cat.org.uk), noting their concerns and that the referral is being made under Stage 3 of the fitness to study procedures. Correspondence should also include information in relation to any previous stages that have been attempted. Staff should forward all relevant records and correspondence relating to the matter, including information relating to any previous stages under this procedure. The Head of School in consultation with student support, additional learning needs co-coordinator and other relevant parties, will determine whether initial precautionary action is required such as suspension of studies and whether further information is required such as a health assessment or intervention. It is important to note that suspension of study is not in itself a disciplinary sanction but is to allow a period of time for a full assessment of the circumstances with regard to the student and their programme of study.
- 7.6. The suspension procedure is managed by Student Support and Head of School to ensure consistent application of the policy across the institution. The student will be notified formally in writing of the suspension and any associated terms and conditions, via the Head of School. Suspension will be subject to review at regular intervals. For example, a student may be suspended pending assessment by a Physician or to allow time for relevant medical treatment or a period of recovery.
- 7.7. With the student's consent, CAT may contact their medical practitioner/consultant/family for information regarding their health issues/current condition.
- 7.8. In most cases, students will continue their studies with CAT while the matter is considered. At any stage, however the Student Support Manager and Additional Learning Needs Coordinator may refer a case to the Head of School for consideration of a temporary suspension.
- 7.9. If a student self refers and elects to interrupt their study whilst engaging with the Fitness to Study Stage 3 process, the Return to Study process will be initiated before the student resumes their studies (see Section 10, Return to Study).
- 7.10. If the student elects to withdraw from study and subsequently wishes to re-engage with their study, their application will be treated under the Further Applications to Study process outlined in section 12.

## 8. Welfare Panel

- 8.1. A welfare panel may be arranged at any time, with relevant staff and support services. The composition of the Welfare Panel can be seen in Appendix 2. Students will have the

opportunity to submit written evidence or representations prior to the meeting and where appropriate to do so may be invited to attend the meeting.

- 8.2. Any student who is going through the Fitness to Study process has the right to be accompanied by a person of their choice. At all times this person will be referred to as their “friend” (irrespective of their status or professional role). The friend is entitled to discuss any matter with the student or member of staff during the course of a meeting (including requesting a private discussion), but is not entitled to represent him or her, or his or her views on their behalf.
- 8.3. Students may only bring a friend to a meeting if they have notified the meeting organiser.
- 8.4. The welfare panel will consider a range of factors, including:
  - Disability legislation.
  - The support offered.
  - Medical and other evidence.
  - CAT Equality and Diversity policy.
  - The impact of behaviours on other students and on staff.
  - What reasonable adjustments might enable a student to be fit to study.
  - Any submission made by the student, including any new medical evidence.
  - The likelihood of academic progress in the current situation and in the future.
  - What reasonable and appropriate support might enable a student to be fit to study.
  - The student’s current health and presentation plus any advice about prognosis should they remain in the GSE.
- 8.5. The outcomes of a welfare panel can include:
  - **Fit to study** and engage with the learning experience – with or without a Support Action Plan or conditions (See Stage 4 – Return to Study).
  - **Not fit to study.** The student is temporarily suspended from the GSE for a defined period to allow time to seek help with presenting issues, for example medical treatment/intervention and recovery. At the end of the suspension students can request to resume studies and an occupational health assessment will be required (See Section 10 – Return to Study).
  - **Not fit to study and/or engage with CAT.** A recommendation will be made to CAT CEO to exclude the student from the programme of study. A recommendation can be made so that the student’s access to the CAT premises and GSE VLE should be restricted or subject to specified conditions.
    - The student may be referred to relevant community support services and receive advice about future applications and study (See Section 10 future applications or study).
    - Temporary suspensions of status are put into place with immediate effect. Where a permanent withdrawal is recommended the student is placed on temporary suspension for 20 working days in order for any review request to be submitted, and then permanently withdrawn, or reinstated dependent on the results of any review.

## 9. Student cooperation with the Fitness to Study and Engage in the Student Experience Policy

- 9.1. In the event that a student is unwilling or unable to attend a meeting or participate in any other aspect of the Fitness to Study procedure, CAT may still follow the procedure where it is reasonable to do so. CAT may also deal with issues on the basis of written reports and/or statements in the absence of the student or their representative.

- 9.2. It may be appropriate for professional medical advice to be sought by CAT to support the investigation. If so, students are expected to accommodate this to support the fitness to study process.

## 10. Return to Study Following a Welfare Panel Decision (Not Fit to Study)

- 10.1. Students will be encouraged to maintain contact with GSE student support during their period of suspension, to advise of their progress and to facilitate a return to study when the student is well enough. The relevant member of support staff will be identified at the initial welfare panel.
- 10.2. Students should email [student.support@cat.org.uk](mailto:student.support@cat.org.uk) indicating their wish to return to study. Normally, CAT will require evidence that the student is now fit to study, and where necessary, with the student's consent, receive reassurance from medical practitioners and/or family of the students current situation. The student should allow a reasonable time for this to take place. Students should be aware that return to study may only be possible at certain times of the academic cycle depending on the programme and modules being studied. Dependent upon the timing and period of suspension, return to study may only be possible at the start of a new academic year. Students should be aware that due to modifications to modules and/or programmes during the student's suspension, it may not be possible for them to return to the same academic programme/profile. Students should also be aware that there may be financial implications in relation to suspensions and returning to study and that they should contact Student Finance for advice.
- 10.3. Prior to returning to study, Student Support will:
- Confirm in writing to the student that they are fit to resume and note any conditions of returning to study.
  - If required arrange a welfare panel with relevant staff from GSE including the programme team and/or the student to discuss the support available and the student's return to study.
  - Advise the student that they are required to contact a named member of staff from the programme team to discuss the academic requirements and details of returning to the programme for example start dates, module choices, induction dates and relevant tutorial support.
  - Advise the student that they are required to contact the designated contact within the Additional Learning Needs Team to discuss and implement relevant support for example Disability Support, Individual Support Learning Plan, counselling and mental health, tuition fee and funding advice for example.
  - Notify relevant staff when the suspension is lifted, to update academic staff and administrative records.
- 10.4. Examples of conditions of returning to study can include:
- Maintenance of medical treatment.
  - Compliance with medical advice.
  - Regular contact with medical professionals.
  - Specified contact with tutors.
- (The above list is not exhaustive and is dependent on individual circumstances).
- 10.5. Failure to adhere to the conditions or reoccurrences of concerns regarding conduct, behaviour or health and well-being may result in further consideration of such incidents under this policy or where applicable the Student Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures.



## 11. Maximum Time Limits for Study

Under normal circumstances, including periods of intermission a student should complete their studies within an upper limit of six academic years. Should the students lack of fitness to study exceed this time limit, they will be withdrawn from the programme and be awarded the highest qualification possible from the modules they have completed. If the student has not completed sufficient modules successfully, they will be provided with a transcript of study.

## 12. Further Applications to Study

- 12.1. If a student has been formally withdrawn from a programme of study, they may have the right to apply for a programme of study as a new applicant when they believe they are fit to study and engage in the student experience i.e. their health and well-being circumstances have changed or are managed.
- 12.2. Applications from former students should consider the programmes available at the time of application and seek specialist advice in relation to the relevant support services and any funding implications prior to application.
- 12.3. Students who have been formally withdrawn from the GSE under this policy are required to declare this on application. Failure to disclose this may result in an application being withdrawn or expulsion from the GSE under the [Student Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures](#).
- 12.4. CAT will consider such applications and declarations under this Stage 3 of this procedure

## 13. Transparency

During the course of any Fitness to Study process, the student(s) in question will be kept informed at all times of:

- the names of the people who have been appointed to consider the case;
- the projected timescales for the completion of this (usually within twenty working days) and, if there are unexpected delays or deferrals, any revised timescales;
- all evidence received or collected by the person(s) considering the case;
- the final agreed decision(s), in writing.
- In acting under this Policy, CAT will be mindful of the sensitive and confidential nature of fitness to study matters and its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and Equality Act 2010.

## 14. Appeals against the decision

- 14.1. As this policy is meant to be supportive of the student and followed considering presented evidence, CAT will normally consider any decision it has made to be final and complete. However excluded students may appeal against a decision that they are not fit to study or engage with CAT following the principles of the GSE [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)).
- 14.2. Within this Fitness to Study Policy students can appeal the decision within ten working days of the date of the letter detailing the Welfare Panels decision.
- 14.3. Students can appeal by contacting student support detailing the reasons for their appeal. An appeal can only be made because of one or more of the following grounds:

- CAT has failed to follow the procedure set out in this policy
  - the decision was unreasonable and/or a disproportionate outcome has been imposed
  - the student has material new information/evidence which was not reasonably available before.
- 14.4. The Student Support Team will consider the appeal submission and determine whether there are valid grounds to proceed. The student will be notified within ten working days of their appeal being received whether there are valid grounds to proceed, or not.
- 14.5. The operating arrangements of CAT with UEL and LJMU mean that neither university will be involved with a CAT decision under the Fitness to Study Policy. Consequently, if the appeal to CAT is unsuccessful, students are entitled to take an appeal to the Office for Independent Adjudication. Details of this can be found in the Students Complaints Policy.

## 15. Amendments and Review of the Fitness to Study and Engage in the Student Experience Procedure

CAT reserves the right to amend and review this procedure considering operating experience and/or prevailing circumstances.

Document approved: October 2022

By: Academic Council

To be reviewed by: July 2026

## Appendix 1 – Welfare Panel membership

A welfare panel is quorate with 3 staff members.

The Welfare Panel will be convened and chaired by the Head of School (or their nominee). The Chair is also responsible for organising the administration involved in this process e.g. Booking meeting rooms, taking minutes of the meeting, sending meeting invitations.

The Welfare Panel may consist of the following staff:

Head of School (or nominee)

Academic staff member who has knowledge of the student and their engagement with the course

Programme Leader

Student Support Manager

Additional Learning Needs Coordinator

Any other relevant professional staff as identified by the Chair of the Welfare Panel to enable the full consideration of the individual case

A copy of the notes from all welfare panel meetings will be filed securely by Student Support.

## Appendix 2 - Referral to additional learning needs team

Under Stage 2 of the Fitness to Study and Engage in the Student Experience Policy

1. This form should be used to refer a student to the Additional Learning Needs Team if there are continuing concerns for their health, safety or wellbeing.
2. This form should not be used where the concerns are relating to behaviour or discipline. Please refer to Head of School under these circumstances.
3. You should also submit any additional evidence i.e. medical evidence, statement from the student or staff members, applications for Personal Circumstances, deferred consideration, leave of absence.
4. Should further information be required; a member of student support staff will contact you.
5. The form should be emailed to the Student Support Manager with supporting evidence.



## Referral to Additional Learning Needs Team Form

Under Stage 2 of the Fitness to Study and Engage in the Student Experience Policy

|                                                                                        |  |             |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------|--|
| <b>Student Name</b>                                                                    |  |             |  |
| <b>Student ID.</b>                                                                     |  |             |  |
| <b>Programme</b>                                                                       |  |             |  |
| <b>Contact Telephone Number</b>                                                        |  |             |  |
| <b>Email</b>                                                                           |  |             |  |
| <b>Reason for referral</b>                                                             |  |             |  |
| <b>Academic Advice given<br/>(e.g. Exceptional<br/>Circumstances/LOA/Intermission)</b> |  |             |  |
| <b>Actions taken</b>                                                                   |  |             |  |
| <b>Referred by</b>                                                                     |  | <b>Date</b> |  |
| <b>Signed</b>                                                                          |  |             |  |

## Student Wellbeing Action Plan template

### 1. What are your current working arrangements?

For those of you also working alongside your study you might wish to detail the days you plan to work alongside those you prioritise for study. You might also wish to highlight any flexibility you've agreed with your workplace, for example working hours, to support your study. When thinking about your workspace(s) for study you should consider details of your study space, for example whether working in a shared space, such as a kitchen or other communal home space.

@ CAT

@ Home

### 2. Are there any characteristics of your individual working style that you'd like to make your tutor or colleagues aware of?

For example, do you have a preference for face to face conversations or digital communications when discussing your course. Do need time to prepare prior to meetings or creative tasks; have access to friends on the module for questions you might not want to contact your tutor about, have a written plan of work in place for your research which can be reviewed and amended regularly, clear quality criteria for assessment outputs if you have a tendency to over-work a task, or have tendency to have particularly high or low energy in the morning or afternoon, or in periods of low light levels e.g. Seasonal Affective Disorder.

@ CAT

@ Home

### 3. What helps you stay mentally healthy with study?

For example, taking an adequate lunch break away from your computer, getting some exercise before or after work or in your lunch break, natural light at your workspace, opportunities to get to know fellow students. You may wish to make a distinction between the activities you undertake whilst studying at home compared to when at CAT e.g. visiting the gym or taking a walk on your lunch break whilst working at home.

@ CAT

@ Home

### 4. Are there any situations or behaviours that can trigger poor mental health for you whilst studying?

For example, background noise in the workplace, screen working, conflict at work or at home, group work, anxieties with presentations, tight deadlines, something not going to plan, difficulties in contacting colleagues whilst working from home.

@ CAT

@ Home

**5. What can you, your tutor or friends and family put in place to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy while studying and minimise these triggers?**

For example, regular feedback, ensuring you are eating healthily and have good sleeping patterns, working patterns, managing screentime.

**@ CAT**

**@ Home**

**6. How might experiencing poor mental health impact on your work and study?**

For example, you may find it difficult to make decisions, over-editing essays, struggle to prioritise tasks, difficulty with concentration, drowsiness, confusion, headaches.

**Effects**

**7. Are there any early warning signs that might be noticed by others when you are starting to experience poor mental health?**

(For example, changes in normal working patterns, withdrawing from colleagues, struggle to prioritise work tasks, appearing tired or distracted, headaches)

**Tutors and colleagues whilst studying @CAT**

**Friends, family and colleagues whilst working and studying @ Home**

**8. If we notice early warning signs that you are experiencing poor mental health – what should we do at CAT?**

(For example, talk to you discreetly about it, contact someone that you have specified)



**9. What steps can you take if you start to experience poor mental health at CAT? Is there anything we need to do to facilitate them?**

(For example, time to go for a short walk, find a quiet space to work)

|          |
|----------|
| Steps... |
| 1)       |
| 2)       |
| 3)       |
| 4)       |
| 5)       |

Please include contact names and numbers for us to get in touch with someone if you become unwell.

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Contact name 1: _____ | Number _____ |
| Contact name 2: _____ | Number _____ |

**10. Is there anything additional you would like to share that would support your mental health at CAT?**

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date to be reviewed \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgements**

This document draws heavily on the work of the charity Mind. More details and support can be found at:

- <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/employer-resources/wellness-action-plan-download/>
- <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/lookingafteryourmentalwellbeing.html>
- <https://www.blurtitout.org/>
- Headspace app - <https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>

## Guidance Notes - For the Student

When completing the Wellness Action Plan, take your time to think about your health and your own specific needs. Consider your lifestyle as well as your job and/or study, and what you need to do personally to remain well, as well as the support you are looking for at work or in study.

You may wish to ask yourself what physical activity you need to undertake to keep well but in the case of physical health issues, not run the risk of exacerbating the issue. Examples include:

- Walking each morning for at least 30 minutes and no more than 45 minutes
- Cycling or swimming twice a week
- Pilates for stretching

Relaxation techniques are proven to have significant health benefits and you may wish to consider incorporating those into your daily routines such as:

- Deep breathing exercises
- Mindfulness or meditation
- Yoga

When considering specific work-related triggers, spend time to understand those carefully and discuss them with your line manager. Spend time also thinking about what reasonable actions you feel would mitigate these triggers, considering the needs of both parties. This information will help your manager consider adjustments where possible. Potential factors and mitigating actions could be:

- Conflict at work → timely intervention
- Organisational change → additional 1:1 time with your line manager
- Being excluded from decision making → being invited to a particular meeting
- Specific task struggles such as heavy lifting, attention to detail with the written word or numbers → assessed individually and/or referral to occupational health

What are the warning signs your manager should look out for when you are starting to feel unwell?

For example:

- Withdrawing from colleagues
- Changes in behaviour, such as increased irritability
- Reduced performance
- Frequent sickness absences

What actions would you commit to if you start to feel unwell? For example:

Discuss it with line manager

- Take a full lunch break, go for a short walk, or take a rest
- Engage with colleagues and the wider organisation
- Revisit the personal actions in the Wellness Action Plan

Finally, you may want to consider the benefits of discussing your individual working style with your line manager. For example, do you prefer email or more face to face contact or perhaps you would benefit from a quiet space on occasion to help focus on a project. You may prefer to work with a written plan of work or to meet regularly to review and reset priorities. Having open and honest conversations with your line manager will help to facilitate a productive working relationship to support your health.

