

Update regarding consultation on the proposed introduction of a Fitness to Study Policy and Regulation

In November 2014 Education & Student Committee approved the proposal for a suite of projects, called the *If Things Go Wrong* Project, designed to enhance support for staff and students engaging with formal procedures. A consultation regarding the proposed introduction of a Fitness to Study Policy and Regulation, which would be a new Policy and Regulation for the University, formed part of this project. In 2015, Education & Student Committee noted that the consultation had been extended to allow further consultation, towards implementation from the beginning of the next academic year (2016/17).

The Consultation has worked on developing a draft Policy and Regulation, and accompanying Guidance, making recommendations on provision of training and support, and making recommendations for supporting mechanisms for on-going evaluation and monitoring.

The purpose of this paper is to provide Education & Student Committee with an update

Recommended Actions

Education & Student Committee is asked to **note** this report.

The consultation on proposed Fitness to Study Policy and Regulation

This consultation's approach has been to formalise the University's approach to concerns raised regarding student well-being, the support provided, with a view to better management of challenging or crisis cases. The Policy would be applicable where:

- there are significant concerns of potential risk to a student, staff, institutional partner or the public in arising from issues relating to student's health (physical or mental) or well-being; or,
- there are significant concerns about a risk to the learning environment thought to be having a negative impact on the student themselves or fellow students and staff.

It is proposed that this Policy apply to all students across the institution, apart from where professional body requirements would require the use of another existing procedure (for example, Fitness to Practice). Education & Student Committee noted in March 2015 that the Dean of Validation would consider any implications for validated institutions and partnerships arising from the development of this new Policy and associated guidance.

The Consultation Group itself has incorporated staff from across the institution including Academic staff; professional staff from a range of Schools, student support services, Student & Academic Services; and, the Student Union. The Group has now developed a draft Policy and Regulation, which should be ready for circulation to Boards of Studies in February 2016.

A Student Focus Group, arranged with the help of the Student Union, was held in December 2015 to capture feedback on the draft documentation to ensure accessibility to students. A view has been sought from a firm of solicitors the University liaises with in relation to student- matters to ensure that the proposed Policy and Regulation aligns with good practice and any relevant legislative duties.

The Group's work on recommendations regarding appropriate training and guidance is moving forward.

Looking ahead, the timetable for upcoming activity is as follows:

- Early February 2016: legal advice on the draft Policy and Regulation to be implemented
- February 2016: the draft circulation to all Boards of Studies for consultation, agreement on Guidance and proposals for training
- April 2016: full draft Policy and Regulation submitted to Education & Student Committee
- May 2016: proposal put to Senate requesting approval for implementation in 2016/17

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