

PROCEDURE

Procedure Title

Fitness to Study Procedure

Parent Policy

Enrolment Policy

Preamble

Monash College is committed to supporting the wellbeing of students or learners and recognises the importance of a student's or learner's health and wellbeing in relation to academic progression and participation in the Monash College community. There may be occasions when a student's or learner's mental or physical health conditions result in concerns regarding their fitness to study and/or the ability to participate in the Monash College community. Monash College supports the needs of students or learners with health related conditions by offering early intervention, providing targeted support to students or learners and staff, and providing fair avenues for students or learners with health related conditions to suspend studies where necessary.

Scope

The Fitness to Study Procedure is applicable to all Monash College students or learners. The procedure will be enacted when there are concerns relating to the student's or learner's wellbeing in relation to physical or mental health, or psychological disorders; and where the incident is not covered by another Monash College procedure.

The procedure is invoked only in instances when the needs of the student or learner exceeds the usual support services available, or in the instance that a student's or learner's physical or mental health impedes them from attempting to engage their studies successfully.

The procedure will ensure a consistent and sensitive approach to managing cases, providing an appropriate and fair level of intervention varying on individual circumstances.

Definitions

Unfit to Study

A student or learner is assessed as being unable to continue in their studies for a deemed period of time due to concerns for the student's, learner's or others wellbeing. A student or learner may be unfit for study when one or more of the following applies:

- A student's or learner's behaviour poses a risk to their own health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of others
- The student or learner is (or is at risk of) adversely affecting the teaching, learning and/or experience of other students or learners
- The student or learner is (or at risk of) adversely affecting the day-to day activities of Monash College

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student's or learner's health or behaviour prevents the student or learner from successfully completing the course, unit or learning activity currently enrolled in or applied for; or - When Monash College receives information from an external service and on further investigation confirms that the student or learner may be unfit for study |
| Case Coordinator | Guardianship and Student Welfare Manager, Student Engagement Services |
| Fitness to study Advisory Group | A standing group of staff nominated by Monash College with experience in student or learner health, disability, welfare or safety. The group provides advice to the case coordinator on reasonable adjustment to studies and appropriate ways for Monash College to respond to and support students or learners with fitness to study issues. It will not make a diagnosis or provide advice on the management of a student's or learner's physical or mental health related condition. |
| Medical Report | A report of results of a medical examination detailing the findings of a registered medical professional, and where appropriate a Psychologist/ Psychiatrist report. The report must be appropriate to the student's or learner's condition. Reports in languages other than English must be submitted with a NAATI certified translation. |
| Registered Medical Professional | A health practitioner registered to practice by the appropriate accredited body. Australian doctors and health practitioners must be registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. Monash College reserves the right to nominate an approved registered medical professional or Medical Centre on a case-by-case basis. |
| Mandatory Leave | Approved leave of absence that has not been requested by the student or learner and may include conditions that must be satisfied before the student or learner can re-enrol in the program in which they were previously enrolled or in another program of study at Monash College. |
| Fitness to Study | The capability to engage with studies and/or to function more widely as a member of the Monash College community. |

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| Perspective | A database controlled by Student Services in which all incidents are recorded. Documentation is attached and stored as required. User level access restrictions apply. |
| Psychological Health | A state of well-being in which the student or learner realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can study productively, and is able to contribute to their community. |
| Mental Illness or Disorder | Is a diagnosable illness that affects a student's or learner's thinking, emotional state and behaviour, and disrupts the student's or learner's or learner's ability to study or do the work required to meet their academic obligations or carry out other daily activities and engage in satisfying personal relationships. |
| Physical Health | The absence of any physical illness and that to the best of a student's or learner's knowledge and belief, supported by an approved medical professional, that they are physically fit and there is no other medical condition likely to prevent them from meeting their academic obligations. |

Procedure

| Ref | Steps | Responsibility |
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| 1. | Identifying at Risk Behaviour | |
| 1.1 | Any person who considers that a student's or learner's behaviour represents grounds for concern about their fitness to study and where the need exceeds the usual support services available must report this to the relevant Director Any incident reported in the Safety and Risk Analysis Hub (S.A.R.AH.) that are a result of a student's or learner's mental or physical health. | Monash College Staff Monash College Staff |
| 1.2 | The incident must be reported to the case coordinator in writing within 24 hours of the relevant person's knowledge of the situation. The relevant Director is notified of the case via copy of the email notification to the case coordinator. | relevant Director |
| 2. | Addressing fitness to study | |
| 2.1 | The case coordinator will: 1. Attempt to make contact with the student or learner within 24 hours of receiving the referral | Case Coordinator |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Consider the student's or learner's perception of their mental or physical health, and the response of the student or learner to any steps taken by Monash College to manage the situation 3. Invite the student or learner to present further relevant information, such as medical or other professional reports. The doctor of health practitioner must be registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency or the equivalent body if students or learners are outside Australia. 4. Identify the risks presented by the behaviour to the student or learner and/or wellbeing of the student or learner and others by completing the Fitness to Study Checklist; and 5. Provide the completed Assessment Checklist to the Head of Student Services 6. Maintain a record of all lodged concerns for a student or learner in Perspective. | |
| 2.3 | <p>Upon receiving the Assessment Checklist, the Head of Student Services will take one of the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirm that referral to the Fitness to Study Advisory Group is not required or - Confirm that the case must be referred to the Fitness Advisory Group and the timeframe in which the group must meet or - In cases deemed severe the case coordinator may refer to the Head of Student Services for immediate suspension pending investigation. <p>The Head of Student Services will communicate the required next action to the case coordinator.</p> | Head of Student Services |
| 2.4 | <p>Fitness to study – Update to student or learner</p> <p>The case coordinator will issue the student or learner with a fitness to study update.</p> <p>The update will be either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) That the case is not in the Fitness to Study scope, and provides student or learner a reminder of Monash College support services | Case Coordinator |

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| | <p>Or</p> <p>b) That the case will be referred to the Fitness to Study Advisory Group</p> <p>Or</p> <p>c) That an urgent decision has been made.</p> | |
| 2.5 | When a student or learner is notified the case is not to be referred to the Fitness to Study Advisory Group, the case coordinator will refer the case to the relevant Director for determination of next steps/ relevant procedure to apply to student or learner. | Case Coordinator |
| 2.6 | <p>When a student or learner is notified the case is to be referred to the Fitness to Study Advisory Group, the notice must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - grounds for concern, - outline the potential consequences of an unfit to study determination, - the opportunity for the student or learner to provide evidence to demonstrate that they are fit to continue their studies - a five working day period to respond - Monash College Support Services available to the student or learner - A link to the policy. | Case Coordinator |
| 2.7 | The case coordinator will advise the relevant Director of the outcome sent to the student or learner. | Case Coordinator |
| 3.0 | Role of the Fitness to Study Advisory Group | |
| 3.1 | <p>The Head of Student Services and relevant Director determines the appropriate members to convene for the Fitness to Study Advisory Group and advises the case coordinator.</p> <p>The group must meet within a reasonable time period determined by the student's or learner's current situation. This will be determined by the Head of Student Services.</p> | <p>Head of Student Services, relevant Director</p> <p>Head of Student Services</p> |

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| 3.2 | <p>The Fitness to Study Advisory Group must provide an informed assessment of the student's or learner's realistic ability to meet program expectations.</p> <p>The group must take into consideration the information collected from the consultation and advice from relevant individuals.</p> <p>The group may provide advice on managing and supporting students or learners with at risk behaviour.</p> | |
| 3.3 | <p>The Advisory Group will take one or more of the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No further action - Referral to appropriate Director for implementation of alternative policy and Procedure - Referral to the appropriate additional support services - Recommend that the student or learner apply for an appropriate entitlement (deferral, study load adjustment) - Recommend to the relevant Director that the student or learner be suspended - Provide advice to the student or learner about changes to behaviour, with a review period imposed - Refuse to re-enrol the student or learner - Refuse to offer admission to a prospective student or learner - Place student or learner on mandatory leave - Withdraw the student or learner from or refuse to approve the student or learner attending placements, fieldwork or other Monash College activities. <p>Any action taken will be documented and communicated to the student or learner, including reasons for the decision, any actions to be taken and the student's or learner's right of appeal.</p> | Fitness to Study Advisory Group |

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| 3.4 | <p>The Fitness to Study Advisory Group must maintain a register of all referred cases and outcomes in Perspective (via the Case Coordinator).</p> <p>All information collected regarding Fitness to Study will remain confidential for use within the procedure and is subject to the Data Protection Act and Monash College Privacy Policy.</p> | Fitness to Study Advisory Group |
| 3.5 | Relevant Director is notified of the outcome | Fitness to Study Advisory Group |
| 3.6 | <p>Notification letter, signed by the Head of Student Services is delivered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - student or learner - Student Administration - where applicable, with details of the impact on enrolment. | Head of Student Services |
| 4.0 | Return to Study | |
| 4.1 | <p>A student or learner deemed unfit to study must provide a medical report, where appropriate a Psychologist or Psychiatric report from a registered Medical Professional, upon request before re-commencing studies.</p> <p>The report must state that the student or learner is “fit for study”.</p> <p>An assessment for return to study must be provided a minimum of 21 days prior to the return to study date. If the report is dated more than 40 days prior to the return to study date the student or learner must present a certificate stating they are fit to study no more than 2 weeks prior to commencement.</p> | Monash College Student or learner |
| 4.2 | In receiving an application to return to study the case coordinator will notify the Head of Student Services. | Case coordinator |
| 4.3 | <p>The Fitness to Study Advisory Group will be re-convened to assess the application for return to study. The members in attendance, where possible, are those members that formed the initial Advisory Group and are familiar with the case.</p> <p>The Fitness to Study Advisory Group will make one of the following recommendations:</p> | Fitness to Study Advisory Group |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the re-enrolment of the student or learner. - Support the re-enrolment with recommendations of additional conditions to be met by the student or learner. - Recommend that the student or learner apply for a further period of intermission. - Refuse to re-enrol the student or learner. | |
| 4.4 | The application to re-commence studies will be decided upon by the Head of Student Services and relevant Director on recommendations from the Fitness to Study Advisory Group. | Head of Student Services and relevant Director |
| 4.5 | The Head of Student Services will notify the student or learner and Student Administration of the application outcome. | Head of Student Services |
| 5.0 | Appeals | |
| 5.1 | Appeals can be made via the Student Grievance and Appeals Policy and Procedure | |

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| Legislation and Standards | Disability Discrimination Act 1992 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) Privacy Act 1988 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) |
| Reference Policies and Supporting Documentation | Non-Academic Student Misconduct Policy Monash College Student Academic Integrity Policy Student Grievance and Appeals Policy RTO Complaints and Appeals Policy Student Code of Conduct Monash College Privacy Policy |
| Responsibility for Implementation | Head of Student Services |
| Status | Revised |
| Key Stakeholders | Monash College Senior Leadership Team Head of Student Services Director, STEM Director, Humanities Director, English Language Director, Business Guardianship and Student Welfare Manager Director, Education Strategy and Industry Development Student Counsellors Learning Skills Advisers Manager Student Administration Monash College Students |
| Approval Body | Senior Leadership Team |
| Date Effective | 26/4/2022 |
| Next Review Date | 26/4/2025 |
| Owner Job Title Division | Head of Student Services |
| Procedure Author | Academic Governance Officer, Governance |

Contact

Head of Student Services

Change History

| Version number | Approval date | Approved by | Brief outline of changes |
|----------------|---------------|--|--|
| 1.0 | 01/03/2019 | Senior Leadership Team | New Procedure |
| 1.1 | 11.12.2019 | Director, Governance | Legislation update |
| 1.2 | 15.05.2020 | Director, Student Services | Change of title for Diploma Senior Team Leader to Head of Studies |
| 1.3 | 28.07.2020 | Director, Student Services and Director, Governance | The Fitness to Study Advisory group will convene and advise on return to study requests. |
| 1.4 | 26.4.2022 | Head of Student Services and Director, Governance | Minor amendment to the roles responsible. |