

# Responding to Complex Student Situations Policy

1. Oxford Brookes University seeks to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for all students and staff. The University's primary responsibility towards students is the delivery of high-quality learning, teaching and research provision, but in support of this provision the University also offers a range of support services. These services are designed to provide students with advice, guidance and practical help, which supports them to continue with their studies as successfully as possible, and helps them to make the most of their time as a student of Oxford Brookes.
2. The University's support services are *elective*. They exist for the support and benefit of students but students can choose whether or not they engage with them, and to what extent. Students are encouraged and advised to make use of the University's support services in order to receive guidance, advice and practical help with any aspect of their life as an Oxford Brookes student.
3. Whilst the University has a strong commitment to student support, it is not *in loco parentis*. The University is an adult community, and the vast majority of our students are adults, and as such all students are expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour, health, welfare and compliance with the Student Conduct Regulations. The provision of support services does not imply or convey any formal legal duty on the part of the University to safeguard the welfare of its students over and above such expectations as are placed on the University by applicable legislation, for example, the [Policy & Procedure for the Safeguarding of Children](#), the Prevent Duty required by the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Equality Duty to make reasonable adjustments for students and staff with disabilities, the Public Health Duty, and its obligation, as both an employer and a provider of services, to provide a safe environment for all those working and studying at Oxford Brookes.
4. Many aspects of the University, including some of its buildings, are accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, every week throughout the year, but generally speaking, the University's support services are available during normal office hours and are not an emergency response service.
5. The University recognises that students will sometimes find themselves in complex, risky or vulnerable situations. In such situations the University will take an appropriately collaborative approach to supporting the student(s) concerned and responding to the situation. The University has a Case Conference Group which is in place to advise individual members of staff on how to respond in such situations, and to monitor the University's responses to such situations.

6. In some such instances, the Case Conference Group will advise that a Cause For Concern Group should be formed, which will bring together different colleagues and services involved in supporting the student(s), and will nominate a member of the Cause For Concern Group to act as the Lead Person, with responsibility for co-ordinating the group and maintaining an Actions Log. Members of the Cause For Concern Group will inform each other of any actions taken in support of the student(s) or in response to the situation in question. All actions taken will be logged. The log will be kept confidential and will only be shared with members of the Cause For Concern Group and with the Case Conference Group.
7. In taking this collaborative approach to the support of students in complex situations, students' consent will be sought before information is shared with University colleagues and/or with appropriate external agencies. In such situations, students are encouraged to give consent for information to be shared amongst appropriate University colleagues and/or relevant external agencies. However, in extreme circumstances where there is an immediate concern for the safety of students or staff, information may be shared without students' consent. Such information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis and only in situations where there is an obvious risk to safety, or in order to comply with a legal obligation such as the Prevent Duty or the Public Health Act. Any sharing of information will be undertaken within the expectations of the Data Protection Act.

For further information about this policy, please contact the Deputy Director of Academic and Student Administration (Registry).

**Approved by:** Executive Board, 9 November 2015

**Under review:** September 2023 – This policy is a series of Safeguarding / Mental Health related policies that are under review and will be updated by June 2024 ready for the 2024/25 academic year. The management of complex cases continues to be monitored through the Case Conference Group with oversight from the Deputy Director of ASA (Student Services).