



Student Welfare Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Scope	4
3. If you're struggling with your Health, Mental Health & Wellbeing.....	4
A) Speak to Someone You Trust.....	4
B) Support at the UCO: The Student Support Team	4
C) Support at the UCO: Counselling.....	5
4. When to Speak to Student Support.....	5
5. Wellbeing Check-Ins	6
6. Your Data.....	6
7. The Multifaith & Contemplation Room.....	6
8. The Calm Room.....	7
9. Useful Contacts	7
10. External Organisations Offering Low-Cost Counselling	7
11. Places of Worship in Southwark.....	8
Core Documentation Record Page	9

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 University can present a number of new challenges, opportunities and experiences which to many students is exciting, and part of the attraction in attending University. However, we recognise that the student experience is not the same for everyone, and in addition, things may happen along the way which can have an adverse effect on how you're feeling and your engagement with your course.
- 1.2 Your health and wellbeing are important to us at the UCO. We have a small team of professionals within the student support team that are here to listen, support and assist should you find yourself experiencing any difficulties whilst on the course.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy has been written with the intention that it will be read by students that are experiencing difficulties and are unsure of the support and facilities that are available.
- 2.2 This policy has also been written as guidance for staff and students that are concerned about the wellbeing of a student and seeking guidance on when to refer on to the Student Support team.

3. IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING WITH YOUR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

A) SPEAK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST

- 3.1 If you're struggling with your health, mental health and/or your general wellbeing it can be a great source of comfort to confide in someone that you trust, whether that be a family member, friend, or spouse. Where possible, we encourage you to speak to someone at home about how you're feeling.

B) SUPPORT AT THE UCO: THE STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

- 3.2 We also encourage you to speak to the Student Support Team at the UCO who are trained to listen, advise, and support you with how you're feeling. The Student Support Team offer confidential, non-directional and non-judgemental advice and support to best assist you with your specific needs.
- 3.3 The Mental Health & Disability Coordinator acts as the first point of call at the UCO within the student support team and is available throughout the week at BHS (room 3.12) and via MS Teams. They can also be contacted on StudentSupport@uco.ac.uk.
- 3.4 Alternatively, you can inform another member of staff whom you trust. If they feel you would benefit from speaking with the Mental Health & Disability Coordinator, they may refer you on with your consent.
- 3.5 The Mental Health & Disability Coordinator can assist you with:

- Stress management
- Health & wellbeing
- Disability support & guidance
- Financial advice & support
- UCO bursaries & loans
- Reasonable adjustments to class, exams and Clinic
- Managing exam and assessment deadlines
- Authorising leave for you in Clinic for your health

3.6 Whilst we are able to support the majority of our students in-house, if we feel you would benefit from specialist support, or additional support, we may refer you to other professionals with your consent. Alternatively, where we feel this would be beneficial, we may ask you to make a self-referral to your GP, NHS talking therapies or other healthcare professionals.

C) SUPPORT AT THE UCO: COUNSELLING

- 3.7 The UCO also offers free, confidential, short term counselling, which can be helpful in exploring or managing more complex emotions that are affecting your mental health and/or wellbeing.
- 3.8 To book an appointment for counselling at the UCO, please email Counsellor@uco.ac.uk.
- 3.9 We recognise the importance of faith and culturally sensitive support when accessing counselling, and a request can be made to see a counsellor from a specific background when booking an appointment.
- 3.10 If you would prefer to speak to counsellor outside of the UCO, a list of external organisations offering low-cost counselling can be found at the end of this document.

4. WHEN TO SPEAK TO STUDENT SUPPORT

- 4.1 We understand it can be difficult to speak to someone when you're struggling with your (mental) health and/or wellbeing, it may never feel like the right time to speak to someone.
- 4.2 The Student Support Team operate on an open-door policy, offering you the opportunity to speak to us about your concerns at any point in your academic journey.
- 4.3 You will also have the opportunity to disclose a health condition and/or disability, including a mental health condition at the start of every academic year, through our healthcare questionnaire.
- 4.4 Our counselling service remains open also remains open all academic year.

5. WELLBEING CHECK-INS

- 5.1 Wellbeing check-ins are an informal check-in or catch-up that is arranged between you and Mental Health & Disability Coordinator, to see how you are.
- 5.2 If required, we will discuss putting support, strategies and/or reasonable adjustments in place for you.
- 5.3 A wellbeing check-in may be scheduled for the following reasons:
- You have disclosed that you are struggling with your mental health/and or wellbeing
 - Concerns from a member of staff that you may be struggling
 - High number of absences from Class and/or Clinic
 - Any unauthorised absences
 - Missed exams without a request for Special Circumstances
 - Missed assessment deadlines without a request for Special Circumstances
- 5.4 Where we feel you would benefit from further support by multiple internal teams, you may be referred on to the [Managed Support Plan](#).

6. YOUR DATA

- 6.1 Protecting your data is important to us; the information you share with us remains confidential.
- 6.2 Due to the nature of the course, we may need to inform staff on a 'need to know basis' so the appropriate adjustments can be implemented for you in class, clinic and in examinations. We will only ever do this with your consent.
- 6.3 Your data will be kept on our records for a maximum of six years, after this time your data, including any associated documentation (e.g. diagnostic reports) will be destroyed. No personal information will be shared beyond the Student Support team unless we have express permission to do so, and in exceptional circumstances. Please read our Safeguarding policy for further information.

7. THE MULTIFAITH & CONTEMPLATION ROOM

- 7.1 We understand that time out of a busy day for reflection and/or contemplation can be a great source of comfort and can hold great significance to an individual's life. We do our best to ensure that you are given the space to reflect, practise your faith freely and to be understood at the UCO.
- 7.2 We have a designated Multifaith & Contemplation Room on the first floor at the end of the corridor at Borough High Street (teaching site). This space is open to students of all religious beliefs and can be used for prayer, meditation and/or quiet reflection.

- 7.3 We recognise that the Multifaith & Contemplation Room may be busy at particular times, and we ask you to respect the customs and needs of one another's beliefs. We encourage you to visit your local place of worship in Southwark if the Multifaith & Contemplation Room is fully occupied. A list of local places of worship can be found at the end of this document.

8. THE CALM ROOM

- 8.1 We recognise that some students may benefit from a calm space where they can rest and self-regulate their mind, body, and emotions.
- 8.2 We hold a designated Calm Room that is intended for these purposes and can be helpful in assisting students that are a managing a disability, health condition and/or an injury.
- 8.3 The Calm Room can be located on the first floor at the end of the corridor at Borough High Street (teaching site) and is next to the Multifaith & Contemplation Room.

9. USEFUL CONTACTS

Head of Student Services	Oversees the Student Support Team and ensures that student support services are provided appropriately.
Course Leaders	Support students with concerns about their general academic studies as well as content specific issues.
Unit Leaders and Tutors	Provide support with content specific issues.
Registry	Staff members provide procedural information on the Special Circumstances Procedure, taking an interruption of studies and withdrawing from the UCO.
Student Finance Officer	Should be notified when there are issues with paying tuition fees.

10. EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS OFFERING LOW-COST COUNSELLING

Westminster Pastoral Foundation	https://wpf.org.uk/
Think CBT	thinkcbt.com/london
British Psychotherapy Foundation	britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk

The Inner-City Centre for Psychotherapy	icclondon.org.uk
Anxiety UK	anxietyuk.org.uk
Minster Centre	https://www.minstercentre.ac.uk/

11. PLACES OF WORSHIP IN SOUTHWARK

Anglican Churches	Southwark Cathedral
	Christ Church Southwark
	St. Anne's Bermondsey
	St George the Martyr
	St Hugh's
	St John's Waterloo
	St. Mary's Bermondsey
	Holy Trinity with St Matthew
Roman Catholic Churches	The Most Holy Trinity Church, Dockhead
	St Georges Cathedral
	Our Lady of La Salette
	St. Patrick's Friary
	Most Precious Blood
Methodist Churches	Bermondsey Central Hall
Baptist Churches	Oasis
	Haddon Hall
	Metropolitan Tabernacle
Buddhist Temple	Kagyü Samye Dzong
Synagogue	Bevis Marks Synagogue
Mosques	Old Kent Road Mosque & Islamic Centre
	Baitul Aziz Masjid

CORE DOCUMENTATION RECORD PAGE

Student Welfare Policy

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	Sep 2018 Academic Council	New policy to clarify student welfare and support services available to students.	Student Support Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website	Aug 2020
V2.0	May 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendment in line with staff title update	Student Support Officer	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website	May 2022
V3.0	Mar 2023 Academic Council	Scheduled Review: Policy revised in entirety to reflect current UCO practice.	Head of Student Services	All master versions will be held in: SharePoint – Quality Team Published: Website	Mar 2026

Equality Impact

Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)	X
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)	
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)	

If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this policy, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk