

## STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH<sup>1</sup>

### SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL CHANGES

#### General changes

The document has been reviewed and is re-issued without amendment.

(Amendments to version 04.0, UPR EQ07 are shown *italics*.)

## 1 INTRODUCTION

*This document has been endorsed by the Academic Board with effect from 1 September 2016<sup>2</sup>. It incorporates, as appropriate, the agreed institutional terminology set out in UPR GV08<sup>3</sup> and should be read in conjunction with UPR EQ03<sup>4</sup>.*

## 2 SCOPE

The policies and procedures set out in this document apply across the whole of the University's educational provision and are intended to support students experiencing mental health problems.

#### (Notes for guidance:

- Unless it is inappropriate or unhelpful to do so, this document uses the term 'mental health' throughout. The term 'mental illness' is used specifically to refer to clinically recognised patterns or symptoms of behaviour that can be diagnosed as mental illnesses.
- Whilst these terms and others such as 'mental health problem', 'mental distress' and 'mental ill-health' may help to clarify aspects of the student mental health agenda, mental health is best understood as a continuum along which any person may move. The University recognises that diagnostic labels may not indicate the severity of illness or emotional difficulty and that each case is unique.
- Mental ill-health can affect anyone of any age, gender, ethnicity or social group. Whilst one in four people will experience some kind of mental health problem during the course of a year, mental health is still commonly stigmatised and misunderstood (ref mind.org.uk.)

## 3 POLICY

### 3.1 The University will take positive steps to:

- a provide a range of support and adjustments for students who experience mental health problems which impact on their University life;
- b offer support to all concerned when working with students with more complex mental illness impacting directly on their University life;
- c create an inclusive environment by promoting mental wellbeing, positive attitudes and enhanced understanding of mental health issues;
- d keep under review services and support for students with mental health conditions, including links to external services.

<sup>1</sup> **Note 1 for Partner Organisations (UK and Overseas)**  
Organisations to which the University franchises programmes will be expected to have local mechanisms in place for the implementation of the policies set out in this document (UPR EQ07).

<sup>2</sup> **Academic Board minute:** 621, 22 June 2016, *refers*.

<sup>3</sup> UPR GV08 'Glossary of Approved University Terminology'

<sup>4</sup> UPR EQ03 'Equality and Diversity Policy'

**(Note for guidance:**

- The University recognises that some students will experience some type of mental health problem during the course of their studies. In all cases, the University is committed to supporting students who experience such problems and creating an environment in which positive attitudes towards mental health and wellbeing are promoted.
- In many cases, problems will be self-managed by the student concerned and remain unknown to the University. However, some will become more complex and will have a direct impact on the student's experience of University life.
- Mental health problems can impact on all areas of University life. The experience of the individual can be influenced by many factors including personal lifestyles, the perceived attitudes of others and the availability of support. The mental ill-health itself may, at times, have a significant effect on how a student perceives, experiences and deals with situations.
- Many students with mental health problems are supported successfully in managing their mental health needs with the aim of completing their studies. However, for a number of students, a mental illness has such a detrimental impact on their health and wellbeing, that this needs to be prioritised over their studies. Such situations can be difficult, in particular when the mental illness requires specialist mental health support and the student is unaware or unaccepting of the severity of his or her condition. The University recognises that complex situations like these can impact not only the students themselves but also on the people around them including their fellow students and University staff.)

- 3.2 The University seeks to promote mental wellbeing and positive attitudes towards mental health through its health promotion activities and work with the Students' Union and other agencies.
- 3.3 Through raised awareness and positive promotion of mental health, the University will seek to encourage applicants and students to disclose any mental health conditions, including those recognised as a disability, so that adjustments and support can be agreed for their University life.
- 3.4 In dealing with students with mental health problems, the University will take steps to ensure that, based on their own individual circumstances, students are always listened to, treated with dignity and respect and supported.
- 3.5 The University will make reasonable adjustments and meet its commitments under the provisions of the Equality and Diversity Policy (UPR EQ03<sup>5</sup>), the Data Protection Policy (UPR IM08<sup>5</sup>) and other relevant legislation.

**(Note for guidance:**

Some mental health conditions will be recognised as a disability under the Equality Act (2010). However, many people with mental health conditions will not identify themselves as being 'disabled' and some will not fall within the scope of the legal definition of disability. All are included in the context of this policy and will be supported in accessing services within the University.)

- 3.6 The disclosure of a mental health problem will be treated as a confidential matter unless there is reason to believe that a student's mental health would place the disclosing student or another person at serious risk, in which case information will be shared, without the consent of the disclosing student, on a 'need to know' basis.

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<sup>5</sup> UPR IM08 'Data Protection'

## 4 **STUDENTS PRESENTING WITH COMPLEX MENTAL ILLNESS**

- 4.1 When a student presents as having a complex mental illness, he or she will be supported in accessing the most appropriate services both within the University and, where appropriate, from external mental health teams and services.
- 4.2 Where a student's mental illness is having a detrimental impact on his or her student life, the Office of the Dean of Students and its Student Wellbeing teams will take pro-active steps to identify the most appropriate course of action to support the student and, where required, other students and University staff who are also involved. The University will, in all cases, use its best endeavours to ensure that students who are experiencing mental ill-health are enabled to continue their studies.
- 4.3 Where a student's mental ill-health is so severe that it impacts on his or her wellbeing and/or safety or that of others, the University will seek to ensure that the student's continued involvement in University life is not detrimental to his or her mental health recovery. Where required, the University will seek further evidence from an appropriate medical professional concerning whether continued study is appropriate for the student at that time.
- 4.4 Where it is evident that continued study is detrimental to the student's mental health recovery, this will be discussed with the student and an appropriate course of action will be identified and agreed.
- 4.5 Where a student wishes to continue with his or her studies but there is evidence that this would be detrimental to the student's mental health recovery or the safety and wellbeing of others, the Vice-Chancellor has discretion to suspend the student temporarily or to exclude the student (UPR GV01<sup>6</sup>, UPR SA13<sup>7</sup> and UPR SA15<sup>2</sup>, refer).
- 4.6 During periods of suspension, the University will hold open the student's place on his or her programme. Where evidence provided by an appropriate medical professional confirms that the student is well enough to return to study, the Vice-Chancellor has discretion to lift the suspension. Where a student is enrolled on a Professional Programme, the Suspension will not be lifted unless the student's fitness to practise has been confirmed and Occupational Health clearance has been given.

### ***(Note for guidance - students enrolled on Professional Programmes***

*UPR SA15<sup>2</sup> defines a Professional Programme as a programme of professional education leading to a University of Hertfordshire award, successful completion of which would make the student eligible to apply for Registration and/or would entitle him or her to practise and/or would indicate the student's potential suitability to practise. UPR SA15<sup>2</sup> uses the term 'Regulator' generically to refer to bodies authorised by the Privy Council to permit practise and where appropriate/relevant, to Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies and to Professional Bodies.)*

## 5 **IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 The University:
- i provides a range of mental health support through the Office of the Dean of Students, its Student Wellbeing teams (Counselling, Disability and Mental Health), the University Medical Practice, the Students' Union Advice and Support Centre and the Student Occupational Health; support is also widespread in Schools, Housing and other professional departments;

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<sup>6</sup> UPR GV01 'Articles of Government'

<sup>7</sup> UPR SA13 'Student Discipline'

- ii maintains close links with external mental health teams and seeks to work closely with them, in particular during times of crisis;
  - lii provides regular support for people with mild, moderate and severe mental health conditions.
- 5.2 The Office of the Dean of Students will review the services available to support students with mental health problems and take steps to ensure that Schools and professional departments work effectively together to provide a cohesive approach.
- 5.3 This document will be reviewed annually by the Dean of Students.

Mrs S C Grant  
Secretary and Registrar  
Signed: **1 August 2017**