

Policies and Procedures of Student Support in IBS

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1. Rationale and Mission Statement

These *Policies and Procedures*, in line with Paragraph (fa) in Section (3) of §12 of the Act on National Higher Education, lay out the strategies, procedures and policies that are used in order to identify students who may be struggling personally or academically, or may pose a risk to themselves, other students or members of faculty. These policies and procedures are the central driver behind IBS' retention strategy, with the aim of supporting students as best as possible so that they can continue with and complete their programme of studies successfully. These measures are designed to support students on all IBS programmes through the provision of guidance to both students and IBS teaching staff. All of the measures below are in place in order to ensure that the Student Support Manager, Faculty and Senior Management can pro-actively address the needs of individual students as well as the wider student body. Central to this is the Mission Statement of the Student Support Manager which reads:

The Student Support Manager's mission is to improve the wellbeing of students in order to ensure that they reach their intellectual, physical, emotional, social and civic potential. By offering a confidential space to discuss academic or private issues, the Student Support Manager will help individual students through difficult personal situations as well as address the needs of the student community as a whole.

2. Identifying students in need of support

2.1. Identification of need for support by students

The IBS student support service provides a private and confidential space for students across all programmes to discuss matters they believe to be having a negative impact on their studies at IBS, be they personal or academic. Students are encouraged to see the Student Support Manager as and when they need to discuss any issues they believe are affecting their studies. Such issues include but are not limited to the following:

- Academic confidence / self-confidence / lack of motivation
- Alcohol abuse
- Drug abuse
- Bereavement
- Health issues
- Domestic violence
- Addictions (including gambling)
- Family matters
- Feeling victimised by peers
- Financial issues
- Homelessness
- Learning support matters
- Mental health issues
- Sexual health matters (such as STDs)
- Sexual harassment or abuse
- Struggles with workload / time management
- Poor grades
- Wanting to leave the course

Depending on the nature of the matter, the Student Support Manager may decide to help the student in his/her own capacity or refer the student to the appropriate service at IBS, e.g. International Assistance, Career Office, etc.

The Student Support Manager is available throughout the day from Monday to Friday for students to drop-in as and when it is convenient, as and when a problem occurs and also by arranged appointment.

The Student Support Manager can see students on a one-to-one basis and also in groups whenever required.

Apart from face-to-face meetings, contact can be made via email and telephone. Skype appointments are also offered to students in Vienna.

Students will be informed of this support and availability via as many means as possible, including the Intranet, posters, leaflets, email, induction week and others modes of mass communication.

2.2. Identification of need for support by tutors and peers

Identifying and referring a student to the Student Support Manager for additional help can be a sensitive and difficult task. This section serves as guidance for teachers and all staff who are concerned about the wellbeing, health, level of engagement or motivation of any student at IBS. At all times, staff and teachers are welcome to discuss any matters of concern in confidence with the Student Support Manager.

2.2a Notifying after a staff member's or teacher's own observation

If any teacher or member of faculty through their own observation develops concerns about a student for whatever reason, they should flag (either in person or via email) the student in question to the Student Support Manager as early as possible. The Student Support Manager will then make contact with the student, arrange a meeting and decide on the appropriate course of action. The Student Support Manager will not disclose to the student in question which teacher or member of faculty has raised concern, if the tutor or staff member so wishes. Reporting such concerns in this way does not go against confidentiality.

2.2b Notifying after a student disclosure

If a student confides directly with a teacher or member of faculty about an issue of concern, the staff member can either encourage the student to contact the Student Support Manager themselves or should obtain the written permission of the student to bring the matter to the attention of the Student Support Manager. The Student Support Manager will then arrange a meeting and decide on the appropriate course of action. If the student does not agree, the staff member should contact the Student Support Manager (without disclosing the student in question) and discuss how to proceed.

If there are serious concerns about a student, namely that they have expressed the intent to harm themselves or others, then usual confidentiality rules do not apply. (Please see below for detailed Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure).

2.2c Notifying the concerns of a fellow student

If a situation occurs where a student expresses concern about a fellow student to a teacher or member of faculty, the teacher or member of staff should either notify the Student Support Manager or encourage the student who is concerned to do so.

2.2d Notifying via a third party

If any other party discloses information about the wellbeing of a student to IBS such as the parent of a student, Halls of Residence staff etc. then the Student Support Manager should be notified. The Student Support Manager will decide on the appropriate course of action.

2.3. Identification of need for support by data from institutional databases

Alongside the measures listed above, all the institutional databases (Moodle, Intranet, Request and Neptun) are used to ascertain information regarding attendance and academic performance to uncover signs of student struggles. The monitoring of attendance and academic performance detailed below is solely to obtain information to be used in a manner which expresses concern for the student and not as a means to punitive measures.

2.3a Monitoring status changes

All students who fail to check-in by Mid-February/Mid-October and become passive will be contacted by the Student Support Manager. Students who check in as passive may also be contacted by the Student Support Manager to ascertain their wellbeing during their break from their studies. Students checking in late will also be contacted in order to ensure that they are catching up.

2.3b Monitoring class attendance

- **BSc Year 1:** Attendance data are extracted from Moodle in Week 3, Week 6, Week 9 of each semester.
- **BSc Years 2 & 3:** There is no formal attendance monitoring. Teachers should notify the Student Support Manager about students who are not attending classes as early and often as required.
- **MSc Budapest:** There is no formal attendance monitoring. Teachers should notify the Student Support Manager about students who are not attending classes as early and often as required.
- **MSc Vienna:** There is no formal attendance monitoring. Teachers should notify the Student Support Manager about students who are not attending classes as early and often as required. The Student Support Manager will arrange online meetings with students and a Vienna visit as and when required.

2.3c Monitoring academic performance

Coursework marks early February/July: all Year 1 students with 3 or more grades below 40% will be contacted, with priority given to students whose attendance is also especially poor. The Student Support Manager will meet with students and discover if the problem is academic, personal or both and will deal with each situation on a case by case basis.

Summary table of Pro-active Monitoring

	Semester 1	Semester 2
Status changes (all students)	students who fail to check in by mid-September or request a passive semester will be contacted by SSM	students who fail to check in by mid-February or request a passive semester will be contacted by the SSM
Attendance monitoring (year 1 students)	Year 1 students: weeks 3, 6, 9 students with an absence rate of 45+ per cent will be contacted by SSM	Year 1 students: weeks 3, 6, 9 students with an absence rate of 45+ per cent will be contacted by SSM
Performance monitoring (all students)	early February: students who have received 3 or more failing CW marks will be contacted by SSM	early July: students who have received 3 or more failing CW marks will be contacted by SSM

3. Procedures of Student Support

3.1. Day to Day informal workings of Student Support

The most crucial element of student support is how the information gathered is interpreted and used to nurture and advise students in order to aid their wellbeing, academic confidence and ultimately retention on their respective programmes of study.

The day to day work of the Student Support Manager is built on personal interaction, attentive listening and active compassion. Once a student is identified as in need of support, the Student Support Manager will contact the student by email/phone/mail to offer both face-to-face meetings and telephone consultations. Such meetings and consultations will be of an informal nature, where the aim is to first ascertain an understating of the situation before offering practical advice and reassurance.

In practical terms, tools used by the Student Support Manager will include

- providing guidance to teachers on how they can identify students at risk and how they should proceed
- liaising with teachers about particular students
- supporting Requests and mitigating circumstances
- devising study plans in order to help students with academic deadlines
- exploring alternative ways for students to achieve module learning outcomes and
- where necessary, guiding students to appropriate avenues of professional support outside of IBS.

3.2. Fitness to Study concerns

Despite all informal efforts to help students by means listed above, there may be situations where the health or wellbeing of a student deteriorates to the point where there are concerns about their physical or mental capacity to engage, function and interact with other members of students and staff as a wider member of the IBS community and/or use IBS premises and resources appropriately.

Concern about the welfare of a student may be raised by IBS staff, IBS students and third parties such as parents, healthcare professionals, placement providers, and Halls of Residence staff. These matters will be dealt with in a sensitive, non-judgemental and coordinated manner and refer to instances where:

- A student poses a risk to their own health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of others
- A student's behaviour is (or is at risk of) adversely affecting the teaching process or the learning experience of other students
- A student's behaviour is (or is at risk of) adversely affecting the day-to-day activities of IBS or Erasmus / placement provider

In the cases of Bachelor students, the Student Support Manager should decide whether or not to contact parents or next of kin so that they may assist in order to support the student in question.

3.3. Procedures in cases of Fitness to Study concerns

3.3a. Stage 1

Stage 1 involves the student meeting with the Student Support Committee consisting of one or both Pro-Rectors and the Student Support Manager or their nominee. Stage 1 will be used only in cases where the Student Support Manager considers that a formal warning is necessary to motivate the student to take steps to ensure his/her own health and wellbeing as well as that of others.

If the committee determines that the student's fitness to study is impaired or may be impaired they may take appropriate action which includes but is not limited to:

- Recommend that the student requires a medical assessment to determine their fitness to study and/or ongoing medical support needed to ensure that the student is healthy enough to maintain their studies.
- Draw up a study plan which is to be monitored with the desirable agreement of the student with a review date, clarifying any conditions to be placed on the student, such as in regards to their behaviour or the professional support that they should seek.
- Recommend that a student take a period of absence or Passive Semester. (Upon the passing of such time evidence may be required to demonstrate that the student is now fit to study.)

The Pro-Rector for Student Services will notify the student in writing with reasons of the outcome and with a study/action plan if necessary and the date for review.

3.3b. Stage 2

Stage 2 can be initiated by the Student Support Manager, the Pro-Rectors or the Rector only in extreme circumstances, especially if there is no satisfactory improvement as a result of Stage 1. For Stage 2 cases the Student Support Committee will consist of the two Pro-Rectors, the Chair of the Senior Academic Advisory Board or their nominee. The Student Support Manager may attend in an advisory capacity.

The meeting should be chaired by the Pro-Rector for Student Services or nominee. The panel may decide to apply the following recommendations or measures:

- Specific recommendation in regards to continued external medical support as part of an agreed study/action plan. This will include regular reviews with the Student Support Manager.
- Suspension from IBS for a designated period of time until healthy enough to resume their studies.
- Exclusion or requirement to formally withdraw.

The Rector should be informed of the outcome of all Stage 2 meetings.

3.3c. General provisions

Students undergoing a Stage 1 or 2 fitness-to-study procedure should be advised that for the meeting, they may bring a friend, relative or legal representative for additional support should they wish to do so. Formal minutes of the meeting shall be taken.

Matters should not automatically go through Stages 1 to 2; depending on the seriousness of the concerns Stage 2 can be initiated if deemed necessary.

If the student is unable to attend the meeting due to mitigating circumstances (e.g. hospitalisation) then the meeting will be postponed. If no mitigating circumstance is presented the committee may take a decision in the absence of the student.

Should the student pose a threat to other students or the normal teaching and learning activities of the school, the Rector may temporarily exclude the student with immediate effect, even prior to convening a panel meeting. The panel meeting determines the definitive status of the student.

3.4. Return to Study

For a student to return to study, the Stage 2 panel must reconvene to consider whether the student is fit to resume their studies. In all cases, the student must provide satisfactory independent medical

evidence that they have overcome their health difficulties. If it is determined that a student is able to return to study a study/action plan will be agreed.

3.5. Right of Appeal

The student may appeal in writing against any decision reached at Stage 2. Appeals against a Stage 2 decision are possible according to the procedures described in §24-25 of the Student Disciplinary Regulations, with "Disciplinary Committee" replaced by "Student Support Committee" in interpretation. Appeals against Stage 2 decisions are decided by the Rector.

Further appeals against the Rector's decision are possible according to the procedures described in §26-27 of the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

4. Closing provisions

These Policies and Procedures should be subject to review from time to time, upon evaluation of their effectiveness and feasibility.

These Policies and Procedures were accepted as an annex to the International Business School's amended Organisation Regulations by Resolution number 6/2016 of the Senate at its meeting of 12th December 2016.

Dr László Láng
Rector