

IBS Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 International Business School (IBS) is a vibrant higher education institution in which it is a privilege to study and work. IBS culture is enriched by the diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles which make up the faculty, staff, and student body. As such, the very fabric of the IBS community rests on its long-standing commitment to an environment built on equality, diversity, inclusion, health, and safety.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish the actions, procedures and measures IBS can take when the health, wellbeing or behaviour of a student deteriorates to the point where there are concerns about their physical or mental capacity to engage academically, 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. The procedure provides a framework for identification, intervention and support, with the intention whenever possible to enable a student to engage or progress with their studies.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all fully enrolled students and if relevant all students seeking a return to study which has been suspended for any reason. This policy is not an alternative or substitute for any other wellbeing related policy or policy used to address student misconduct. At the same time, this policy should not detract or stand in the way of any acute or dangerous situation where the behaviour of a student presents a serious and immediate risk to themselves or others, especially if the matter is a safeguarding issue.

4. Legal Context and Records

- 4.1 IBS is mindful and respectful of sensitive and confidential data. And as such, any actions taken under this policy and meeting records will be subject to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other relevant natural laws of Hungary and Austria.

5. Policy Statement

- 5.1 IBS expects students who are fit to study to engage with their studies in a manner which is fruitful for them and beneficial for other students, tutors, all parties and to the environment, buildings and equipment. And it is hoped for many that the journey is one that is enriching, perhaps challenging but also fun and fulfilling. However, for some students, difficulties may arise, or situations may occur where the behaviour of a student is a cause of concern for themselves, or others (fellow students, faculty, or staff).
- 5.2 When these situations occur, IBS is committed to the following principles:
- Providing a clear, consistent, appropriate and sensitive response to the raising of a concern
 - Establishing clear lines of responsibility at all stages and levels for all parties to follow and to avoid conflicts or interests.
 - Adopting a supportive and compassionate approach to the process to maximize the chances of successful progression and completion of the learning journey
 - Communicating openly and transparently with the student regarding the process, the decisions made, and their right to appeal/review
 - Making informed decisions, taking into consideration all relevant circumstances

6. Raising a Concern

6.1. Concern about the welfare of a student, their behaviour, mental health or wellbeing can be raised by any member of IBS faculty, staff, student or visitor and third parties at any point via an email sent to Wellbeing. These concerns can relate specifically to but are not limited to instances where for example:

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

A student continually shows disengagement with their studies (poor or non-attendance, continuous non submission of assignments, lack of communication with faculty and staff)

6.2 Concerns are reviewed, initiated, and overseen by the Head of the Centre for Student Services and the Student Support Manager all of whom, where relevant, decide the following:

1. Whether to initiate a Fitness to Study Procedure or not
2. Whether to initiate another IBS procedure or not
3. At which level to initiate the concern
4. Who (designated lead) or what board will investigate the concern.

6.3 In cases of disengagement with studies or a sudden drop in academic performance - detected by attendance and performance monitoring or reported by staff -, IBS Wellbeing must investigate whether the change has been triggered by circumstances that might raise fitness-to-study concerns. If this is the case, the Fitness to Study Procedure may be applied.

7. Procedure

7.1.1 The Fitness to Study Procedure comprises of two stages for managing concerns. The procedure may, if deemed appropriate, be initiated directly at Stage 2 without any requirement for Stage 1 to have been initiated or completed.

7.1.2 IBS can also issue a temporary protective suspension¹ to allow a student to be assessed by a medical or other appropriate professional, to access internal and external support services, or for further information to be obtained prior to a Stage 2 meeting. Temporary suspensions are considered a neutral act and are approved by the Rector, or two Pro-Rectors by joint decision, upon recommendation by the Student Support Manager

7.1.3 If a student is unwilling or unable to participate in any aspect of the Fitness to Study Procedure, IBS can deal with any issues without the student using reports and statements to reach a decision.

7.2 Stage 1 – Initial/Emerging Concern (Informal)

7.2.1 Stage 1 is for initial or emerging concerns and is to address issues that are perceived to be minor or at an early stage, usually in an informal manner, though part of a formal process. Stage 1 concerns will nominally be designated to the Wellbeing Counsellor and can include other

¹ A temporary suspension will result in the student not being allowed to access Moodle and other IBS resources or attend any scheduled classes.

members of staff or faculty involved in the meeting, depending on the exact nature of the concern (academic progression/physical mental wellbeing)

7.2.2 Stage 1 meetings are supportive and informative for all parties involved with the nature of the concerns identified to the student and space given for the student to hear those concerns and to express their perspective of those concerns. Agreed or considered courses of action can include but are not limited to:

- No further action
- An action plan to monitor academic progression
- Specific requirements in regards conduct and behaviour
- Specific requirements in regards attendance and engagement
- Specific supportive resources within IBS
- Specific support resources external to IBS
- A further review meeting in regards any of the above points within the same semester where possible

For Stage 1 meetings, the Pro Rector (Operations) approves the agreed course of action.

7.3 **Stage 2 – Serious/Continuing or critical concern (Formal)**

7.3.1 Stage 2 is for a serious/critical or a continuing concern following on from Stage 1 where an agreed course of action has not been successful or the conduct, behaviour or wellbeing of the student in question has deteriorated. Stage 2 concerns are where more formal interventional must be explored by a **Fitness to Study Committee** consisting of:

- Student Support Manager (Chair)
- Pro-Rector (Operations) or their nominee
- Pro-Rector (Academic) or their nominee
- An Academic Area lead by invitation

7.3.2 The student should be formally notified that a meeting will be taking place and invited to submit any relevant supporting evidence (medical or otherwise beforehand). They may also be allowed to attend the meeting with a friend, fellow student or family member in support.

7.3.3 The committee can, if appropriate, necessary or viable, request medical evidence to review prior to the meeting.

7.3.4 The Wellbeing Counsellor and/or any other member of staff who participated in a Stage 1 meeting will be required to speak or present statements to the committee based on their experiences with the student.

7.3.5 If the panel determines that the student's fitness to study is impaired or may be impaired, they may recommend an appropriate, compassionate and supportive course or courses of action which includes but is not limited to:

- That the student requires a medical assessment to determine their fitness to study and/or ongoing medical support is needed to ensure that the student is healthy enough to maintain their studies.
- Drawing 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, attendance, engagement or the professional support that they should seek.
- 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.)
- Specific recommendation in regards to continued external medical support as part of an agreed study/action plan. This will include regular reviews with the Wellbeing Counsellor

- Suspension from IBS for a designated period of time until healthy enough to resume their studies.
- Exclusion or a requirement to formally withdraw.

7.3.6 In recommending a course/courses of action to be taken, the Chair will remind the committee where relevant, of the student's visa status and any other relevant factors.

7.3.7 Once the committee has made a decision, the student must be informed as soon as possible.

7.3.8 At all stages, the student involved is made aware of the relevant procedure and all possible outcomes and record of the committee meeting will be made.

7.4 Review/Right to Appeal

7.4.1 The student may ask IBS to review/appeal the recommended decision reached via this policy and procedure within ten working days of receiving the initial recommended outcome of a Stage 2 meeting. An appeal must be made in writing and can only be made on the following grounds, where the student can evidence one or more of the following:

1. IBS failed to correctly follow its own procedure
2. The student has additional information or evidence which was not available at an earlier time

7.4.2 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 "**Rector**" in interpretation. The Rector cannot review the case afresh or carry out a fresh investigation.

7.4.3 The Rector can take two decisions:

1. Reject the appeal and uphold the original recommendation
2. Uphold the appeal and refer the case back to the Fitness to Study Committee

7.5 Return to Study

7.5.1 For a student to return to study, the Stage 2 committee must reconvene, with the student in attendance to consider whether the student is fit to resume their studies. When considering whether a student is fit to return, the committee will consider the context, circumstances of the case and if the student has completed the necessary conditions for their return. In order to make an informed decision, the committee may:

- Consult with relevant staff and/or external professionals involved in recommending the suspension, protective suspension or temporary exclusion;
- Request where appropriate, the student meets with other staff, medical or other external professionals for assessment, input or advice;
- Request the student produce satisfactory medical and/or other evidence of their fitness to study from recognized professionals (e.g. a GP, a qualified mental health specialist) who have sufficient knowledge of the student;

7.5.2 If the committee's decision is that the student is fit and able to resume their studies, this may start at the next realistic opportunity where the students will not be disadvantaged.

7.5.3 If the committee's decision is that the student should not return to study at this time, the exact parameters for return must be communicated to the student.

7.5.4 The student in question will be informed at all times of all outcomes.

This Policy was adopted by the Senate of IBS by virtue of the resolution No. 2/2024 at the session held on 19 February 2024

Budapest, 19 February 2024

Dr. László Láng

Rector

President of the Senate