

EMMANUEL COLLEGE

Fitness to Study

Introduction

The College seeks to provide a safe and comfortable environment in which all students are able to study and perform to the best of their ability. Students work and live in close proximity to each other, and whilst many students find studying and living in such an environment easy and enjoyable, others can find it more challenging.

This document sets out steps which may be taken if there are concerns about a student's welfare or general fitness to study. It outlines the things that can be done if anyone in the College community has a concern about a student's behaviour or health and feels that there is the potential for the welfare or academic progress of the student or of others to be disrupted or threatened.

Studying and living in the College means that students have responsibilities - and there are clear expectations about the behaviour which is appropriate within the College community.

Concerns about a student's behaviour (and his or her fitness to study more generally) might arise in a wide range of circumstances. For example: -

- concerns about a student might be reported by a third party (e.g. friend, other student, department, member of the public, or medical professional);
- a concern might be identified by the student himself or herself and then be reported to someone else in the College;
- a student's behaviour might be causing problems to the student themselves or others, for example they might demonstrate mood swings or show signs of depression or become withdrawn;
- a disciplinary matter might lead to an underlying physical or mental health problem being identified;
- a student's academic performance or behaviour might raise concerns and an underlying physical or mental health problem might be thought to be the cause.

In cases such as these the College may need to take action to protect the best interests of the student concerned and other members of the College community. Any such action will be sensitive, consistent and limited to that which is necessary. Decisions concerning a student's fitness to study will only be made after appropriate consultation with the student concerned.

Support available to students

Students are encouraged to raise any concerns with their Tutor. It is of course good to for the Tutor to be approached and advice and support about any difficulty or problem to be sought at an early stage.

In addition to a student's Tutor there are other support services in the College and the University. These are listed in the appendix to this document. Self-help leaflets from the University Counselling Service (www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/leaflets.html) may also be useful.

Fitness to study

The term 'fitness to study' refers not only to a student's ability to engage with his or her studies but also to their ability to engage with the entire student experience. The College normally expects students to live in harmony with others, and not conduct themselves in a way which has an adverse effect on those around them. Certain standards of behaviour must be met – if they are not concerns regarding fitness to study may arise. Sometimes these concerns may be related to a student's health and general well-being – in those circumstances disciplinary action may be inappropriate.

The College has a duty of care to its community and is bound by health and safety legislation and the Equality Act, which means that it may need to take action if a student presents a risk to themselves or to others.

What action will the College take?

If a problem does arise a student's Tutor will normally discuss the matter with the student concerned and explain the precise nature of the behaviour that is a cause for concern. The student's views will be sought and he or she may be encouraged to think about using one or more of the support services offered by the College or the University. In this way informal discussions may resolve the matter and academic arrangements or other support may be identified which will enable the student to study effectively. Follow up meetings may be required to assess the effectiveness of the support provided. It is important for the student to respond positively and take advantage of the support which is available.

If the problem is serious or cannot be resolved through informal discussion and support the College may need to take further action. It may be necessary to consult other

members of staff in the College or University, for example, the student's Director of Studies, the Supervisor or Course Director in the case of Graduate student, the University Counselling Service or the Disability Resource Centre in order that further information or advice can be obtained. In some cases a medical assessment may need to be sought so as to enable the College to address the student's difficulties in the most effective manner possible and make an accurate assessment of any risk. Throughout this process the student will be made fully aware of the nature of the College's concerns and the possible outcomes if the difficulties remain. It may be that further support for the student is required or other adjustments might be made by the College or the University. In some cases the student might decide to seek the University's consent to suspend his or her studies for a period of time.

In very serious cases, where, for example, there is evidence to suggest a serious risk to either the health and safety of the student or others it may be necessary for the College to consider the student's suspension, exclusion or expulsion. Were this to be the case the College would adopt a formal procedure to review the matter and consider any evidence along with the views of the student.

Return to College

If because of a student's health or general well-being a student takes a break in study the College will, in due course, need to consider whether to ask the University for permission for the student to return to study. In such circumstances the College would normally consult other relevant organisations such as the University Counselling Service, the University Mental Health Advisor, and Disability Resource Centre. etc., and would contact a relevant medical professional for an assessment of the student's ability to manage the demands of returning to studying. The student would only be permitted to return if the College was satisfied that he or she was fit to study. On returning to the College appropriate support measures and a return to study plan would be discussed with the student.

Appeals

If at any stage a student is not satisfied with any decision made concerning his or her fitness to study the Students' Complaints Procedure: (<http://www.emma.cam.ac.uk/about/official/docs/Students%20Complaints%20Procedure.pdf>) should be followed.

Confidentiality

The College takes account of relevant legislation such as the Data Protection Act, the Mental Health Act, the Human Rights Act, the Equality Act 2010 and the general rights and expectations of a student to confidentiality. In serious cases the College will consider whether the student's emergency contact should be informed. Personal sensitive data and data of a confidential nature will be handled appropriately.

APPENDIX

In addition to your Tutor advice and support may be sought from one or more of the following:

Director of Studies
ECSU or the MCR
The Dean
University Mental Health Advisor
University Counselling Service: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk
College Nurse
College Counsellor
Cambridge University Students Union: www.cusu.cam.ac.uk/welfare/
Graduate Union: www.gradunion.cam.ac.uk
Disability Resource Centre: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/disability/>
Occupational Health <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/oh/>
Student Advice Service. www.studentadvice.cam.ac.uk
Adult eating disorder service www.cambsadulteds.nhs.uk/
Drinksense www.drinksense.org/
CAMEO www.cameo.nhs.uk/
Alcoholics anonymous www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/
Cocaine anonymous www.cauk.org.uk/