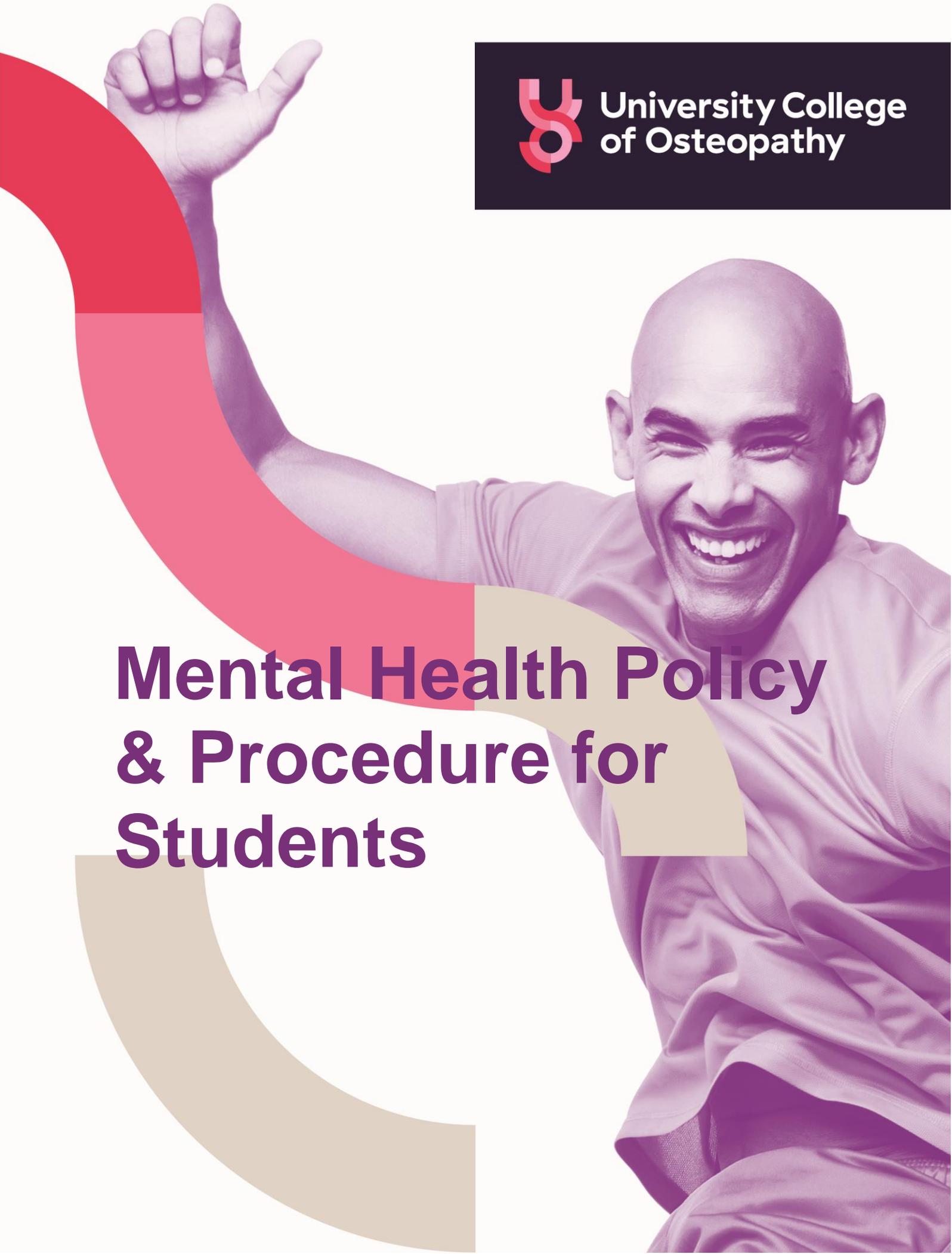




University College
of Osteopathy

Mental Health Policy & Procedure for Students



Core Documentation Cover Page

Mental Health Policy & Procedure for Students

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	Nov 2012 Academic Council	To provide students with clear guidance and policy on mental health	Student Support & Equality Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Nov 2014
V2.0	Aug 2017 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update institution name change from British School of Osteopathy to University College of Osteopathy and to update staff role titles.	Student Support Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	2017-2018

Equality Impact

Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)

Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)

X

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

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS

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1. SCOPE

- 1.1 The following policy sets out support arrangements at the University College of Osteopathy (UCO) available to students with health problems and the procedure that should be adopted should concerns arise regarding a student's health.
- 1.2 Members of staff who have concerns about a student's mental health should refer to the staff guide Identifying and Responding to Students in Difficulty (A Guide for Staff).
- 1.3 Students who have concerns about a student's mental health should refer to the staff guide Identifying and Responding to Students in Difficulty (A Guide for Students).

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The UCO is committed to a policy of inclusion, and creating a non-discriminatory and supportive environment for all our students. The Equality Act 2010, places a legal duty on Higher Education Institutions not to discriminate against disabled students and those with long term health conditions (including mental health difficulties), either in terms of admission to the course or in the provision of education and support services. Accordingly, and wherever possible, the UCO will make reasonable adjustments to enable individual students to participate and engage in all aspects of learning and UCO life. To help this process, students are encouraged to disclose any disability or health condition (including mental health issues), to the UCO Student Support Manager, as so that they, and academic colleagues (with student consent), can work with the student to agree types of adjustments that can reasonably be made.
- 2.2 Entering higher education is a life changing experience which can cause significant lifestyle changes, such as living away from home and family, living on a limited budget, and for some, adjusting to a different culture. These changes can sometimes affect a student's sense of wellbeing and lead to periods of low self-esteem. In most cases this can be overcome by help from university support staff, tutors and new friends. However a small number of students may go on to have continuing issues which may affect their mental health throughout their studies. A small number of students also arrive at university with pre-existing mental health difficulties. From pre-entry to graduation, all students are actively encouraged to disclose disabilities including those with mental health difficulties.

3. STUDENT SUPPORT

- 3.1 The Student Support Manager is able to help with issues which may be affecting a student's ability to study and/or their wellbeing. Research reveals that up to a third of students have serious, non-academic problems. These include serious illness, bereavement, caring for another member of the family, holding down a job, coping with divorce or separation, drug and alcohol abuse, or other social problems, such as discrimination or housing problems.
- 3.2 The Student Support Manager is also able to help students who have a disability or long term health condition and can help students apply for Disabled Students

Allowance (DSA), which may, for example, include in the award provision for a Mental Health Mentor, for those with mental health problems. They can also arrange for reasonable adjustments such as extra time in assessments and special circumstances to be considered during periods of illness. The Student Support Manager can also liaise with a student's health specialist (with consent) regarding their condition. All information is confidential: however students are encouraged to permit disclosure to other relevant staff members so that support arrangements can be implemented.

- 3.3 The Counsellor is available to see students regarding issues which may be affecting them either inside or outside UCO. The Counsellor is able to refer outside of UCO, if a student's concern is better dealt with by a specialist, or they may advise a student to visit their GP, if appropriate. The Counsellor can give advice on exam nerves and the general stress of university life. This is a totally confidential service.
- 3.4 The Student Learning Advisor is able to help students with learning techniques, planning and study skills. This can be helpful to students who may be suffering from stress and not coping well with the course.
- 3.5 The Student Support Manager is normally based in room 3.08 and has an open door policy. The Counsellor can be found in room 3.12 and is available via an appointment system or via email. The Student Learning Advisor may be found in room 3.06 and also has an open door policy.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 4.1 In line with the Equality Act 2010 the UCO recognises its duty that it is the right of the individual as to whether a health issue (including mental health) is disclosed or consent is given to share information regarding the student's health with those relevant. The UCO aims to promote an inclusive supportive environment and hopes that students will feel encouraged to seek appropriate help. The only exception to sharing information without consent would be if it was decided there was a threat to the student's safety or the safety of others, or under legal requirements.

5. DUTY OF CARE

- 5.1 The UCO has a duty of care to its students in legal terms and an ethical duty to pay attention to any potential risks to students where one individual's actions or inactions could reasonably be expected to affect another person. This includes both psychological and physical safety. The duty owed is not a duty to ensure that no harm will ever occur, but a duty to take reasonable care to avoid harm being suffered. This does not mean that the UCO has to be perfect, but it must provide a reasonable standard of care for its students and staff. This duty does not apply if the UCO is unaware of a student's condition and could not reasonably be expected to know of a student's condition. Therefore it is within the interest of all, that if you have concerns regarding your own or some ones else's health you should refer to the following procedure.

6. PROCEDURE FOR ASSESSMENT OF FITNESS TO STUDY ON THE GROUNDS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AND FITNESS TO PRACTISE

6.1 The procedure has three levels, based on the seriousness of risk posed by the behaviour or health of a student.

A) LEVEL 1

6.2 Emerging concerns about an individual's health and safety e.g. significant deterioration in health, appearance, attendance, attitude and/or behaviour might require a response from the UCO (see the Identifying Students in Difficulty Guides).

6.3 A member of staff with primary responsibility (e.g. Student Support Manager) should in the first instance approach the student in a sympathetic and understanding way.

6.4 The nature of the concerns should be clearly identified and, if appropriate, information should be provided about sources of professional support and advice available within the UCO, such as the Student Counselling Service, the Disability Advisory Service and Welfare Advice. A confidential record of this interview should be kept on file. If appropriate the interviewer will carry out a risk assessment, which could lead to level 2 or directly to level 3.

B) LEVEL 2

6.5 Persistent anti-social behaviour, withdrawal or extreme physical change, for example, will be seen as level 2.

6.6 The student will again be interviewed by a member of staff with primary responsibility. At this point they will be advised of the mental health policy.

6.7 The student will to be invited to a meeting with the Course Team Leader and the Student Support Manager. The student may also be accompanied by a friend or relative (if required). Disabled students may also be accompanied by a support worker (e.g. sign language interpreter or mental health worker) as appropriate to their needs.

6.8 The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain the students' perception of the issue/s identified. A clear written statement from the member of staff calling the meeting should be sent to the student, at least 48 hours before the meeting.

6.9 During the meeting, it is important to identify and agree an action plan for the student to observe following the meeting. The consequences, if any, (a) of not keeping to the agreed actions, or (b) continuation of the causes of concern, must be clearly outlined to the student. A record of the meeting must be made with a copy sent to the student and with a copy kept on file. The outcome of this meeting could raise concerns regarding Fitness to Practise which may be cited and documented at this stage.

C) LEVEL 3

6.10 Circumstances or behaviour that cause a persistent concern and a serious risk to Health and Safety or Fitness to Practise and have not, or cannot, be resolved via

level 2 will cause level 3 to be initiated. At this point; stage one of the UCO Fitness to Practise policy would be implemented. A break of confidentiality could occur at this point if the student was seen to be of danger to themselves or others. The UCO Fitness to Practise policy can be found on the intranet.

- 6.11 Should a student be suspended from the course, through the Fitness to Practise procedure, they will be advised of what conditions will need to be met before they may return to UCO. Prior to return the student will have a 'return to studies' interview to ensure that they are fit and well and that support arrangements are in place for their return.