

ACADEMIC POLICY FRONT COVER SHEET

Name of Policy:	Student Mental Health Policy
Scope of Policy:	The policy sets out a framework for how the University seeks to provide a whole institution approach to supporting and working with students who require mental health support.
Owner and Author and Contact for further information:	Director of Student Services and Head of Student Wellbeing
Applicable to:	Students and Staff
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Approval Body:	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>The original Student Mental Health policy was approved by Academic Board in February 2016.</p> <p>A revised/updated V.2 received approval on 26 June 2019.</p> <p>Following substantive review in Autumn 2022 the revised and current policy was approved by Academic Board on 26 June 2023.</p>
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Student Mental Health Policy

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Student Mental Health Policy

1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out a framework for how the University of Lincoln seeks to provide a whole institution approach to supporting and working with students who require mental health support.

An increase in the number of students at a national level with significant mental health difficulties entering Higher Education has caused increasing concern about the mental wellbeing of students. This is reflected in the number of students accessing support at the University of Lincoln and this policy seeks to address both the promotion of mental wellbeing of all students, as well as working with and supporting students with severe mental health problems.

In 2015, Universities UK launched its [#StepChange framework](#) with a refreshed framework *Stepchange: Mentally Healthy Universities* launched in 2018. The framework highlights the following areas for consideration in developing institutional policies and procedures:

- Policy developments both nationally and internationally
- Duty of care and legal considerations
- Demand for institutional services versus external statutory services
- Access to support and guidance services
- Provision of training, development opportunities and information dissemination
- Liaison between internal and external, voluntary, and statutory agencies

This Student Mental Health Policy should be read in conjunction with a number of other [University Policies](#) including: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, Fitness to Study Policy, Fitness to Practice Policy and Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Admissions Policy.

This policy also includes a [Suicide Prevention Plan](#) which has been developed in response to [Suicide Safer Universities](#) guidance published by Universities UK (UUK) and PAPYRUS (the UK's national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide) in order to help universities to prevent student suicides.

The guide includes advice on developing a strategy focused specifically on suicide prevention, covering the following areas:

- Steps to prevent student suicide.
- Intervening when students get into difficulties.
- Best practice for responding to student suicides.
- Case studies on approaches to suicide prevention through partnership working.
- Checklist highlighting steps university leaders can take to make their communities safer.

2. Scope of the Policy

The University of Lincoln is committed to offering a high level of support to all its students, fostering a whole university approach to mental health support.

This policy has been created to:

- promote all aspects of student mental wellbeing
- support students experiencing difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing
- raise awareness among students and staff of mental health issues, services, and procedures
- create an ethos in which the confidentiality and dignity of all are respected
- develop policy informed by liaison with students, staff, and other relevant agencies
- ensure monitoring and review of policy and practice

3. Context and Legal Framework

Several areas of legislation inform the Student Mental Health Policy. Students who have mental illness or a mental health difficulty which is clinically recognised as being chronic are likely to be defined as disabled under the Equality Act (2010).

The University has specific legal responsibilities towards any of its students whose mental health condition meets the definition of disability within the Equality Act 2010. This requires the University to ensure that students with a mental illness are not discriminated against, and that reasonable adjustments are put in place to support their learning.

In summary, the University is required to:

- Exercise a duty of care in providing education and meeting students' educational needs, including pastoral care as well as teaching.
- Take positive steps to promote the wellbeing of its students.
- Ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all those 'lawfully on the premises'.
- Protect against discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, or any other protected characteristic.
- Make reasonable adjustments to support students with disabilities, including those with a 'mental impairment'.
- Ensure confidentiality; disclosure may occur only with a student's consent, or where it can be justified in the public interest, or a duty of care is owed to other students and staff.
- Breach, where absolutely necessary, a student's confidentiality. This would encompass a thorough assessment of the individual whereby it could be risk to self, life and or others.

4. Definition of Mental Health

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mental health conditions' refers to:

- Long term mental illnesses or psychiatric conditions, which may be classified as a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

- Emerging mental health conditions which may develop into conditions that require ongoing support or intervention.
- Temporary debilitating mental health conditions or reactions which impact on a student's ability to fulfil their academic potential.

There are a range of conditions which, when diagnosed by a relevant medical practitioner, sit under the umbrella term 'mental health conditions'. Such conditions include anxiety, depression, eating disorders, trauma, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder, and many more.

5. Support available to students with Mental Health conditions

The following outlines the support available to University of Lincoln students with mental health conditions:

5.1 Pre-Admission and Admission

The University of Lincoln aims to provide a fair and transparent admissions system, which is implemented consistently, and which provides equal opportunities for all, regardless of background

The University's Admissions Policies for both Undergraduate and Postgraduate students provide information for applicants, their parents, guardians, or advisors and for staff within the University, on the procedures and principles involved in making an application to the University of Lincoln.

The University recognises that students with disabilities, medical conditions or specific learning differences are an integral part of the academic community and makes every effort to meet the needs of these applicants. It cannot, however, guarantee to meet those needs in every case.

The University of Lincoln has embarked on an exciting collaboration with the University of Nottingham to offer medical education in Lincolnshire. This course is split into two phases: the early years, where students can learn the skills and knowledge required to become a GP and complete a research project, and the later years, called the Clinical Phase, where students put their learning into practice on placements at hospitals and GP surgeries. This programme is underpinned by Fitness to Practice, which ensures that Students are meeting the professional standards required under the [GMC \(General Medical Council\) guidance](#). The Student Wellbeing Centre and Lincoln Medical School Senior Tutors (both early years and clinical phase) have weekly meetings to ensure close monitoring of all Medical Students and supporting any Mental Health challenges they may be facing. This includes working as a dual partnership with the University of Nottingham disability liaison officers and placement team.

The University of Lincoln will be transitioning to being fully independent of the University of Nottingham by 2026 and there is an opportunity to review best practice and apply additional resources where required. There are currently working groups at different levels to ensure the process is as smooth as possible ensuring that Lincoln delivers a BMBS course, whilst also facilitating the current Nottingham course over the 5/6-year transitional period when both courses will run alongside one another.

The University of Lincoln delivers a variety of professionally accredited courses in Nursing and Social Work as well as our vocationally oriented Health and Social Care degree. The nursing programme, as an example, aims to prepare students to become fit for practice in accordance with

the NMC's Standards for Pre-registration Nursing Education and to be eligible to register as a qualified nurse.

All applications are first considered on their academic merits through the standard selection process. The University sends information on its services to all applicants offered a place on the course and who have disclosed a disability, medical condition or learning difference.

The University of Lincoln's Gender Equality Project is centred on the Athena Swan Charter. It has been more than 13 years since Lincoln began its gender equality journey, with the signing of the Athena Swan Charter in 2008. Since then, the University's inclusion work has gained momentum, achieving a Bronze award in 2014, and successfully renewing it in 2018. Today, six UoL STEM Schools hold Bronze awards, with a Silver Award arrived in 2019, courtesy of the School of Psychology, and all Schools across the University are now engaged in the Athena Swan process.

5.2 Transition

The University of Lincoln recognises that the transition into Higher Education can be challenging for students with mental health conditions and strives to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to ask questions around support at University open days, other recruitment and admission activities.

All applicants and enrolled students are encouraged to declare any pre-existing mental health difficulties prior to arrival at University through recruitment and admission activities so that the University can proactively offer them support advice and guidance, as well as giving the opportunity to engage with specific University transitional events such as the Wellbeing Orientation Welcome (WOW) summer schools aimed at students who may experience anxiety around and concerns about the transition into Higher Education.

Students can disclose past difficulties during the pre-admission and admission stages which impact on their mental wellbeing and may have significant impact on their ability to settle into university life and their studies. Students are encouraged to discuss these with support services if they feel able to, so that appropriate support can be provided.

If students choose to declare a pre-existing mental health condition, their data is captured by the Student Wellbeing Centre where students will be allocated an advisor and will receive contact periodically to engage the student in arranging support for the start of their degree. The Student Wellbeing Centre will make every effort to contact the student via different methods. This includes email, phone, and text where appropriate. The Student Wellbeing Centre will continue to make contact once the student has enrolled with the University.

Students can visit campus, the Student Wellbeing Centre and Accommodation teams if they wish to discuss support further. This can include to discuss any arrangement or support of Adult Social Care Services or Local Authorities etc. The Student Wellbeing Centre work with the Accommodation team to prioritise room allocations specific to, but not exhaustive of, mental health needs if required.

Students can continue to be supported by Student Wellbeing once they have completed their degree, where appropriate. Some students require additional support to help liaise with statutory services in their local area to help ease the transition of leaving University.

5.3 Enrolment and Induction

During enrolment and induction all new University of Lincoln students are given information and guidance on support services available. During welcome week many University services provide weeklong themed activities to support the sense of belonging.

5.4 Accommodation

The University of Lincoln Student Services seeks to work with Accommodation Services to ensure the most appropriate accommodation is identified for the needs of students with mental health conditions.

The University of Lincoln Residence Life (ResLife) Team aims to support students living in University owned and managed accommodation to live independently, and to develop a sense of belonging in our diverse student community. As fellow students, the ResLife Student Assistants provide peer-to-peer support and organise a programme of events, activities, and excursions throughout the academic year.

Current students can contact the Residence Life Team directly, every day between 6pm until midnight via email on ResLife@lincoln.ac.uk, call them on 01522 835550, or contact on social media using the Twitter handle @ResLifeLincoln, or via Facebook and Instagram using @UniLincolnResLife.

5.5 Support following impactful incidents and circumstances

The University recognises that students can experience difficult and distressing events outside of their control whilst at university and that these can have a significant impact on their mental wellbeing and their studies. Types of incidents can include sexual misconduct, domestic abuse, trauma events and family difficulties. Student Services has specialist support for students who experience incidents such as these and encouraged them to access these at the earliest opportunity. [Sexual Misconduct Support](#). [Sexual Violence Liaison Officer Support](#).

5.6 Prevention

The University of Lincoln wishes to promote good mental health to all its students. All students are supported and encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle through education and campaigns around exercise, sexual health, eating a balanced diet and drug and alcohol misuse. Campaigns on these topics are accessible through Student Wellbeing's social media. During Welcome week, Student Wellbeing are visible on campus and involved in days that are themed to get students talking and know what support is out there. These themes include support and preventative measures with drug and alcohol misuse, gambling, general wellbeing, and sexual misconduct.

During the first few weeks of term each academic year, staff from the Student Wellbeing Centre are visible around campus providing talks and presentations to numerous schools talking to the students about the support available to them.

Participation in sport and physical activity is also encouraged. Student Wellbeing also offer a sports centre referral for eligible students with an identified need to help improve both physical and mental health.

5.7 Early Intervention and Support

As well as encouraging early disclosure via open days, induction sessions, residential life team, and via the academic and wellbeing advice offered through Personal Tutors and Wellbeing Advisers, all services across the University such as Student Wellbeing, Student Support & Advice and the International College offer easy-to-access support for students from a range of backgrounds, such as mature students, international students, black and minority ethnic (BME) students, disabled students, and students from widening participation initiatives. ResLife, academic schools and other central services provide an integrated range of wellbeing services with clear signposting and appropriate data-sharing practices.

The Student Wellbeing Centre offers a range of support surrounding mental health. Firstly, by making the service as accessible as possible. Student Wellbeing can be contacted via phone, email, and the online contact form. When the centre is open, students can also opt to walk in and speak directly with a member of staff. Student Wellbeing offer an evening opening times once a week (during term time). Student Wellbeing also offer a night duty worker who is based in the security office to respond to students who are on campus and experiencing a mental health crisis outside of University working hours.

The University also have a ResLife team who support students in university owned accommodation in the evenings, they also offer events throughout the academic year and a lounge each evening to help prevent loneliness and provide support when other services are not open.

The University offer a 24-hour support package with the website TogetherAll, an online Mental Health Community which includes peer-to-peer support, guided self-help, and online courses. Students can use their UOL student log-in credentials to sign up for free and anonymously. Student Wellbeing offer a wide variety of resources that can support students to build the skills and coping mechanisms to help them manage their mental health difficulties. These resources include self-help guides, podcasts, online skills workshops as well as offering one to one advisor appointments and face to face workshops. Students can also access the in-house counselling service.

Student Wellbeing work closely with both internal and external partners to increase the support for students with mental health conditions in the hope that students can have a smooth referral process to an appropriate service. Student Wellbeing offer support on campus with external services to make it easier to access for students such as support with We Are With You for substance misuse, First Steps for support with eating difficulties and body image, Gamcare for support with gambling and Umbrella for specialised support for sexual and domestic violence.

The University of Lincoln funds a [Police Liaison Officer](#) who can offer advice around any issues students may have, including crime and safety. The role is here to listen to students, who can report crime or raise any concerns anonymously. The Police Officer is located in the Student Wellbeing Centre and is available to have an informal conversation or make a full report.

5.8 Nominated Person Consent

Given the increase in numbers of students accessing the support for mental health and wellbeing issues, the University recognises that parents and guardians can play an important part in supporting students through times of difficulty.

From September 2019 students were asked at enrolment to permission to give 'Nominated person

consent'. This gives the Student Wellbeing Service consent to contact their nominated person (this can be a parent, guardian, or a friend) in situations where they have serious concerns about a student's wellbeing.

It is important to recognise that this permission does not allow parents, guardians, or a nominated person to seek information around a student's academic studies or their day-to-day activities and will only be used in relation to concerns around a student's wellbeing.

5.9 Academic Support

All students enrolled at the University of Lincoln are allocated a Personal Tutor whose role is to help students to fulfil their academic potential throughout their studies and help them plan for the future, underpinning the University's commitment to deliver personal tutoring as a central part of the student experience and encouraging them to become embedded in the learning and teaching community at Lincoln.

All Personal Tutors are expected to engage with training support and guidance provided by the University to ensure that appropriate signposting is in place to ensure that students access the most appropriate service to support their needs.

The University provides guidance and support on the role of a personal tutor via the Lincoln Academy of Learning & Teaching.

Students at the University can access a Personalised Academic Study Support plan (PASS plan), this is specific to the University of Lincoln and can be created for any student who has suitable evidence of a diagnosed disability, mental health condition, physical health condition, or learning difference. The evidence must clearly detail a diagnosis and include information on how this affects their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. It must also include specific reference to how it impacts ability to fully engage with academic studies. It is a document that both the student and school receive which details specific areas of academic support including examination requirements. This document will be reviewed every 6 months to ensure each student is receiving the appropriate academic support.

5.10 Interruption of studies

The University will ensure that clear and comprehensive guidance and advice is made available to students wishing to interrupt their studies on the grounds of mental health difficulties and will ensure that a student's return to study is carefully managed and supported through its student support services.

5.11 Student Diversity

The University of Lincoln is committed to supporting students from all backgrounds and will offer specialist support for groups of students, including international students. This will consider sensitivity to and an understanding of cultural and religious differences in attitudes towards mental health.

The Student Wellbeing Centre promotes support for all students, regardless of background or whether they have a declared disability or not. They have a dedicated Wellbeing Advisor who specialises in support for those who struggle to access Higher Education which includes but not exclusive to students who are, postgraduates, mature, care leavers, carers, LGBTQ+, Work Based

Distance Learners and estranged students. The University recognises the difficulties these students may face during their studies which can impact on their mental health. Promotional materials and specialised support are available across services in the University.

The University of Lincoln is committed to supporting all students including international students who have travelled to Lincoln to commence their studies, recognising that the transition into Higher Education can be challenging for students, particularly those who have travelled internationally. The University strives to be compassionate and understanding to the sensitivity around cultural and religious differences in attitudes towards mental health.

The Student Wellbeing Centre has a dedicated Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisor role to support the international students at the University. This includes ensuring students are communicated with prior to enrolment should they disclose any mental health or wellbeing concern. This advisor will ensure they represent Student Wellbeing at any internal or external meetings revolving around the support the University can offer to their international student population including working closely with the University of Lincoln International Business School, Global Opportunities, and the Student Union. They will also ensure that the support available to international students is promoted through a variety of formats.

The University of Lincoln recognises the importance of effective internal and external partnership working in supporting our international student population. This includes keeping up to date with community services and groups that may be supportive to our students. The University recognises the importance of effective and timely signposting for international students, particularly those struggling with aspects of mental health.

The University of Lincoln is also committed to supporting both the incoming and outgoing Turing students, ensuring that appropriate support provisions have been provided both pre-travel and during international study.

University of Lincoln Student Services has a dedicated page on their website with information, resources and guidance for international students here <https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-at-university/international-advice/>

5.12 Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

The University is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment to all its community and will not tolerate harmful, violent or disruptive behaviour. Where students with mental health difficulties which have an impact on the university community, the Fitness to Study Policy will take precedent over any other disciplinary procedures to ensure that students can be assessed and supported appropriately.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The University of Lincoln has a statutory, ethical and moral duty to ensure that the University functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who are enrolled on courses or are visiting the University. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The University has a Safeguarding Vulnerable Children and Adults policy which can be found on the [University website](#).

It is important that all staff employed by the University of Lincoln recognise their own roles and responsibilities in relation to supporting students with mental health difficulties. The University of

Lincoln places great emphasis on signposting students to the most appropriate service available to them albeit internal or external support. The University of Lincoln employs, through its Student Wellbeing Team, professionally trained specialist staff who are trained to support and advise students in relation to their mental health and including sexual and domestic violence.

In some instances, the University is required, for mandatory or statutory reasons, to share information with certain third parties. The University, as the controller, continues to remain liable for ensuring personal data is processed in compliance with the Data Protection Principles. The University aims to provide a supportive environment that allows all students to realise their full academic potential and successfully complete their programme of study. Further details can be found in the [University of Lincoln Data Protection Policy](#)

7. Fitness to Study

The purpose of the [Fitness to Study Policy](#) is to ensure that the University provides a coherent institutional approach when responding to students who are unfit to study.

8. Concern for Welfare and Crisis Intervention

The Student Wellbeing Centre operates a Concern for Welfare (CFW) process which should be followed. Full details of the CFW process and the concern for welfare process flowchart can be accessed [here](#).

The flowchart explains the steps to take to respond appropriately dependant on the severity of the situation.

If any student is presenting as an immediate concern for welfare, you should contact emergency services on 999. You should also inform Security (01522 886062) and if in working hours, the Student Wellbeing Centre (01522 886400)

Examples of an immediate concern for welfare:

- Voicing thoughts to harm other people
- Expressing active suicidal plans and / or intent
- Exhibiting extremely distressing behaviours

Members of staff not within Student Services should not accompany students presenting as a concern for welfare to any location off-campus, unless in exceptional circumstances. This must be approved by the Academic Registrar / Director of Student Services / Head of Student Wellbeing. In these exceptional circumstances, the student must be accompanied by 2 members of staff. The Student Wellbeing Centre has a formal information sharing agreement with Lincolnshire Police and Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust wherein concerns about a student can be shared.

A night-time Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisor from Student Wellbeing may be available to discuss your concerns. Please contact Security services on 01522 886062 who will be able to make a referral to them (subject to availability)

If you are worried about a friend or a loved one who is a student at the University of Lincoln, please contact the Student Wellbeing Centre to pass over any important information.

If you have immediate concerns for the safety of a student, you should contact the emergency services on 999. Please see the following page for more information: [Worried about someone – Student Services \(lincoln.ac.uk\)](#)

9. 24/7 support

The University of Lincoln provides access to online support through Togetherall, which students can access support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Togetherall is a source of support outside of the Student Wellbeing Centres opening hours. It's a safe and anonymous online space that students can go to if they are feeling down, struggling to cope or just want to talk to people who understand what they may be going through. Togetherall offers unlimited, 24/7 accessible online support – you can connect with peers, speak to clinicians, use self-help resources, join groups, or take self-assessments. Many students find it incredibly helpful. UOL Students can access this for free using their UOL email addresses.

The University of Lincoln Residence Life (ResLife) Team aims to support students living in University owned and managed accommodation to live independently, and to develop a sense of belonging in our diverse student community. As fellow students, the ResLife Student Assistants provide peer-to-peer support and organise a programme of events, activities, and excursions throughout the academic year. Current students can contact the Residence Life Team directly, every day between 6pm until midnight via email on ResLife@lincoln.ac.uk, call them on 01522 835550, or contact on social media using the Twitter handle @ResLifeLincoln, or via Facebook and Instagram using @UniLincolnResLife.

The University Security team are present 24/7 on campus and can support with any queries or concerns you might have out of hours, as well as during the day. To contact the University Security Team, call 01522 886062. A night-time Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisor from Student Wellbeing may be available to discuss any concerns that you may have regarding your mental health. Please contact Security services who will be able to make a referral to them (subject to availability).

The University fosters a strong collaborative connection through its external partnerships with public health authorities, Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Police and with several third-sector groups for example We Are With You and the Samaritans. The University is also a key partner in the Lincolnshire wide Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat and the Lincolnshire wide Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention (SPIPG) group. To support 24/7 working, the Student Wellbeing Centre link directly with the Crisis Team and the Mental Health Liaison Service based within A + E, and other key services such as Lincolnshire Police, for which there is a formal information sharing agreement in place.

Full details of out of hours support is available here [24/7 Services & Support \(lincoln.ac.uk\)](#)

10. Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be reviewed by the Education and Student Life Committee annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and has the most up to date information available Unless, for example, a legislative change necessitates an earlier review date).

The University chairs the Lincolnshire wide Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention (SPIPG) group. Select members of this group are responsible for ensuring that this document is reviewed and updated.

11. Data Protection and Confidentiality

The University respects the confidentiality of all its students and will handle students' data in accordance with the University's [Data Protection Statement and Policy](#).

12. Suicide Prevention Action Plan

The Suicide Prevention Action Plan has been developed in response to [Suicide Safer Universities](#) guidance published by Universities UK (UUK) and PAPYRUS (the UK's national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide) in order to help universities to prevent student suicides.

A copy of the University of Lincoln's Suicide Prevention and Response Action Plan can be found on the Student Services Website [here](#)