

Student Conduct Policy

Student Casework – Education Services

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1. Purpose and Authority

This Policy establishes the University's strategic framework for responding to student misconduct. It provides the definitive institutional statement on standards of student behaviour, the University's commitment to a safe and respectful community, and the legal and regulatory obligations underpinning the University's jurisdiction in this area.

This Policy forms part of the wider Behaviour, Health and Practice Framework, which sets out the overarching institutional approach to student behaviour, health, and professional practice. The Student Conduct Matrix forms part of this framework and provides guidance on the categorisation and escalation of misconduct.

All operational procedures, investigatory processes, panel arrangements, precautionary measures, outcomes, appeals, and return-to-study arrangements are governed by their relevant policies, procedures, and schedules, which are subject to the framework's and this Policy's intent, direction and principles.

2. Strategic Intent

The University establishes this Policy to:

- Maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive community in which all students, staff, and visitors can study, work, and participate without fear of harm, harassment, or discrimination;
- Uphold the University's values and legal obligations, including but not limited to duties under the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding frameworks, freedom of speech legislation (including the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023), and consumer protection law;
- Fulfil the University's institutional responsibilities to its student community, reflecting the standard of the reasonably competent higher education institution under common law;
- Ensure transparency, accountability, and regulatory compliance, operating consistently with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework and Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration.

3. Institutional Commitments

The University commits to:

- Respond to misconduct fairly, proportionately, transparently, and lawfully, applying trauma-informed, student-centred approaches particularly in cases involving harassment or sexual misconduct;

- Protect individuals and the wider University community, balancing individual support and fairness with collective safety, wellbeing, and the proper functioning of the University;
- Secure lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom, distinguishing between the expression of lawful views (including controversial or unpopular views) and unlawful conduct;
- Apply, where possible, outcomes that are educative, proportionate, and protective, using the balance of probabilities as the standard of proof and ensuring decisions are evidence-based and reasoned.

4. Principles and Decision-Making Standards

All matters arising under this Policy shall be determined in accordance with the following principles:

- Natural justice and procedural fairness;
- Application of the balance of probabilities as the standard of proof;
- Proportionality and reasonableness of decisions and outcomes;
- Student-centred and trauma-informed practice, particularly in cases involving harassment or sexual misconduct;
- Timely, transparent, and consistent decision-making;
- Compliance with regulatory, legal, and consumer protection requirements;
- Balancing individual support and fairness with the need to protect other students, staff, and the wider University community.

5. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

This Policy is applied in accordance with the University's commitments under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Decision-making under this Policy adopts an equity-led approach, ensuring procedural fairness, accessibility, proportionality, and bias-aware practice, while maintaining the integrity of fact-finding and risk assessment.

The University will consider reasonable adjustments, structural and systemic factors, and the least restrictive means of achieving legitimate aims. Relevant equality considerations will be recorded in decision rationales. Further detail on equality duties, reasonable adjustments, proportionality, and monitoring is governed by the Behaviour, Health and Practice Framework.

6. Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

This Policy is applied in line with the University's legal duty to secure lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom, including the expression of lawful views that may be controversial or unpopular.

Action under this Policy is concerned with the manner, context, and impact of behaviour, not the lawful content of expression, and will be lawful, necessary, and proportionate. The University will balance freedom of expression with safeguarding responsibilities, equality duties, and the rights and dignity of others.

Further detail on the University's approach to freedom of speech and academic freedom is set out in the Behaviour, Health and Practice Framework.

7. Scope and Jurisdiction

Students to Whom This Policy Applies

This Policy applies to all registered students and learners of the University, including those:

- On interruption or temporary withdrawal;
- Pending award;
- Studying off-campus, online, or in work-based learning settings (including apprenticeships).

For the avoidance of doubt, apprentices are subject to this Policy in their capacity as registered students, regardless of any concurrent employment relationship.

For the avoidance of doubt learners on continuing professional development, short courses, vocational courses, credit or module gathering study, are subject to this Policy in their capacity as registered students.

Conduct Within Jurisdiction

The University may consider conduct occurring:

- On University premises;
- During University-related activities (including placements, field trips, and events);
- In online or digital environments; or
- Off-campus, where the conduct reasonably impacts the University community, its operations, safeguarding responsibilities, or reputation.

In determining whether off-campus conduct falls within scope, the University will consider factors including seriousness, impact, ongoing risk, and regulatory or professional obligations.

Relationship to Other Policies

This Policy applies to all non-professional programmes where the primary concern is alleged behaviour that may breach University rules or standards. A student will be managed under this Policy alone, even where wellbeing or support needs are also relevant.

Findings established under this Policy may be relied upon by other routes where appropriate, avoiding reinvestigation and ensuring fairness, consistency, and procedural integrity.

8. Standards of Behaviour

Students are expected to behave in a manner that:

- Respects the dignity, safety, and rights of others;
- Does not interfere with the proper functioning of the University; and
- Upholds the University's values and expectations.

Misconduct may include (but is not limited to):

- Harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying, or discriminatory behaviour;
- Violence, threats, or abusive conduct;
- Misuse of digital platforms or online harassment;
- Serious or persistent disruption to University activities;
- Fraud, deception, or dishonesty.

Examples are indicative and non-exhaustive, enabling the University to respond appropriately to emerging behaviours.

9. Shared Responsibility and Engagement

The effectiveness of the University's response to alleged misconduct depends on the timely and constructive engagement of all parties.

Students are expected to engage honestly and reasonably with conduct processes and with any proportionate measures identified to manage risk or safeguard others. Where a student is unwilling or unable to engage, the University may need to take protective or restrictive action in the interests of community safety and public interest.

Where a student does not engage after being given a reasonable opportunity to do so, the University may make a decision in their absence on the basis of the available information, acting fairly and without adverse inference from non-engagement alone.

Where a student is temporarily unable to engage due to ill health or wellbeing concerns, the University may pause conduct proceedings where reasonable to do so, and may resume the process once the student is able to engage. The University may proceed without a pause

where required to protect others or uphold its safeguarding or public interest responsibilities.

10. Safeguarding, Confidentiality, and Information Sharing

Information will be handled sensitively and shared only where necessary to:

- Ensure procedural fairness;
- Protect individuals or the wider University community; or
- Comply with legal or regulatory obligations.

Confidentiality will be balanced against safeguarding duties, public interest considerations, and regulatory requirements.

The University is not a provider of medical, therapeutic, or statutory intervention. Where a student's behaviour, wellbeing, or risk exceeds what can reasonably be managed through University processes or support services, the University's escalation pathways are to statutory services, emergency services, and/or a student's emergency contact, in accordance with safeguarding and legal obligations.

11. Interface with Criminal and Staff Proceedings

University disciplinary processes are separate from criminal proceedings and staff disciplinary processes.

The University:

- Does not determine criminal guilt;
- May pause or proceed with its own process depending on fairness, risk, and regulatory considerations; and
- Will coordinate appropriately with staff disciplinary processes where matters involve both students and staff, while maintaining necessary separation and confidentiality.

Referral to the Police

Where information received by the University indicates a significant risk that criminal conduct may have occurred, or that there is an ongoing risk to individuals or the wider community, the University reserves the right to make a referral to the police or other appropriate external authorities.

Any such referral will be made on the basis of safeguarding, public interest, or legal considerations and does not prevent the University from continuing, pausing, or concluding its own processes under this Policy, where it is fair and reasonable to do so.

The decision to refer a matter to the police will be made by the Head of Student Casework (or nominee), in consultation with the designated safeguarding lead and other relevant senior staff (e.g., Legal Services) where appropriate. The decision must be documented, including rationale and evidence relied upon, and based on a risk-informed and proportionate assessment.

As a general principle, the University will seek the student's consent before making a referral to the police. However, a referral may be made without consent where the University reasonably determines that consent cannot be obtained or has been withheld, seeking consent would create or increase a risk to the student or others, there is a safeguarding, legal, or public protection obligation to report, or referral is required or strongly indicated by statutory guidance or regulatory requirements.

A referral to the police does not constitute a finding of misconduct.

Alignment with Bail Conditions and Court Orders

If a student is subject to bail conditions or a court order (such as pre-trial bail conditions, restraining orders, or criminal sentence terms), the University will adjust its precautionary measures to fully respect those legal restrictions. Further detail is governed by subordinate procedures.

12. Pre-University Conduct

The University does not take disciplinary action against students for conduct that occurred before they became students of this University, and it will not ordinarily factor pre-university events into misconduct findings.

Pre-university conduct will only be considered in defined and exceptional circumstances, primarily to meet safeguarding obligations or manage serious risks to members of the University community, or to satisfy a clear legal or professional requirement. Details are governed by subordinate procedures.

13. Consent and Acting in the Absence of Consent

As a principle, the University will not normally initiate a conduct investigation or take disciplinary action without the reporting student's consent.

However, there are defined circumstances where the University has a duty to act in the absence of a student's consent, for example when failure to act could compromise the safety of the reporting student or others, or breach legal and/or regulatory obligations. These exceptional circumstances and guiding principles are governed by subordinate procedures.

14. Anonymous Disclosures and Malicious Reports

Anonymous disclosures will not normally result in disciplinary action unless the matter can be independently substantiated.

Where it is determined, following appropriate consideration, that a report or allegation has been made maliciously or in bad faith, the University may consider whether that behaviour itself constitutes misconduct and whether separate action under this or another relevant policy is appropriate. A report will not be regarded as malicious solely because it is not upheld or because there is insufficient evidence to make a finding.

Evidential thresholds for determining malicious or bad-faith allegations are governed by subordinate procedures.

15. Escalation and Response Framework

The University will respond to alleged student misconduct through proportionate and escalating responses, informed by the seriousness of the behaviour, its impact, any ongoing risk, and relevant safeguarding, regulatory, or legal considerations.

Conduct matters will normally be considered through one or more stages as set out in subordinate procedures. These stages are not rigid or sequential, and a matter may enter, move between, or bypass stages where this is reasonably necessary to ensure fairness, protect individuals or the University community, or uphold the integrity of the University's disciplinary processes.

Action taken at an earlier stage does not prevent escalation to a later stage, and the absence of action at a lower stage does not preclude the University from proceeding directly to a higher stage where the nature of the alleged misconduct warrants it.

The detailed operational arrangements for triage, investigation, summary decision-making, and panel processes are set out in subordinate procedures.

16. Independence of Casework and Separation of Responsibilities

Student conduct casework under this Policy will be managed as a distinct, structured, and impartial process, independent of academic delivery, student support functions, complaints handling, and other University activities not directly concerned with disciplinary decision-making.

The University will maintain clear separation of responsibilities between:

- Those who provide academic, pastoral, wellbeing, or support functions;
- Those responsible for triage, investigation, and case management; and

- Those responsible for disciplinary decision-making and appeal consideration.

No individual will undertake multiple roles within the same case where this would, or could reasonably be perceived to, create a conflict of interest, bias, lack of independence, or other material compromise to the fairness or integrity of the process.

Investigations will be conducted by individuals who are independent of the events under consideration, have had no prior substantive involvement in the matter, and are appropriately trained to undertake the role in accordance with this Policy.

Decision-makers will rely on the evidence properly obtained through the conduct process, and will not be influenced by parallel academic, operational, reputational, or commercial considerations, nor by informal information obtained outside the process.

Where a potential conflict, perceived bias, or material compromise is identified, the University will take appropriate steps to reallocate roles, apply safeguards, or appoint alternative decision-makers to preserve procedural fairness and regulatory compliance.

Conflicts of Interest and Role Separation

Any person involved in triage, investigation, case management, decision-making, appeal consideration, or panel membership under this Policy must declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest as soon as it is identified.

Where a conflict is identified, the University will determine what safeguards are required to preserve fairness and independence, which may include reallocation of responsibilities or appointment of an alternative investigator, decision-maker, or panel member.

The declaration, assessment, and action taken in relation to any conflict will be recorded on the case file.

Panel members and any clerk or adviser must confirm before the hearing that they have no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Where such a conflict exists, they must not participate and an alternative will be appointed.

17. Governance and Oversight

Oversight of this Policy and its operation sits with the relevant sub-committee of Academic Board.

The Student Casework function will provide periodic assurance reporting on the operation of the Policy, including the use of powers, fairness, proportionality, conflicts management, and any themes or systemic issues identified through conduct casework.

The University will monitor outcomes and sanctions under this Policy to assure fairness and proportionality. Monitoring will include periodic review of outcomes by:

- (a) stage of process and case type/severity; and
- (b) where appropriate and lawful, protected characteristics and other equality indicators, to identify potential disparities and inform quality improvement.

Monitoring will be used to support consistency, training, and the continuous improvement of decision-making.

The operation of this Policy will be monitored through regular reporting, equality impact review, and periodic review to ensure continued compliance with regulatory and sector expectations.

18. Decision-Making and Outcomes

Based on the investigation outcome, the University may:

- Take no further action;
- Resolve the matter through summary decision-making; or
- Refer the matter to a Student Disciplinary Panel.

Where misconduct is found, outcomes will be proportionate, take account of mitigation and any relevant prior conduct, and may include educational or restorative measures as well as protective or restrictive outcomes.

The range of available outcomes, the criteria and decision-making principles governing their application, the authority to impose them, and the arrangements for review and compliance are governed by the Case Outcomes Policy, which applies across the Behaviour, Health and Practice Framework.

Students are entitled to receive clear, written reasons for any outcome applied, information about their rights, and access to support.

19. Appeals

Students have the right to appeal decisions made under this Policy on specific, defined grounds.

The grounds, scope, process, timescales, and outcomes of appeals are governed by the Behaviour, Health and Practice Appeals Policy, which applies consistently across the Behaviour, Health and Practice Framework and is designed to ensure fairness, accessibility, independence, and compliance with regulatory expectations for effective internal review.

The Appeals Policy sets out students' rights in full, including access to clear information, support throughout the process, and independent consideration of the appeal.

20. Return to Study

Where a student's engagement with study has been interrupted or restricted as a result of action taken under this Policy, their return to study will be managed fairly, transparently, and in accordance with the Return to Study Policy.

That policy applies to all relevant cases arising under this Policy and sets out the criteria, process, decision-making arrangements, and safeguards governing a return to study, ensuring that decisions are proportionate, evidence-based, and made with due regard to the student's rights and the University's duty of care.

Students are entitled to clear information about the process, access to support, and the opportunity to make representations.

21. Reconsideration of Concluded Decisions

The University upholds the principle of finality and certainty in its casework decisions. Once a decision is reached and the internal review and appeal opportunities are exhausted, that decision is normally final.

However, the University recognises that in exceptional circumstances, new evidence may later emerge that casts substantial doubt on the correctness or fairness of the original outcome. In such cases, the University may, at its discretion and under strict criteria as set out in the Reconsideration of Concluded Student Casework Decisions (New Evidence) Procedure, reconsider the case outcome to ensure natural justice and the safety and integrity of the University community.

22. Records Retention

The University will retain records of conduct cases in accordance with its data protection and records management policies.

Sanctions will be recorded for defined periods and considered spent where appropriate.

23. Subordinate Instruments

This Policy delegates all operational, procedural, and process-related matters to subordinate policies, procedures, matrices, schedules, and guidance, including but not limited to:

- Student Conduct Matrix (subordinate to this Policy)
- Behaviour, Health and Practice Framework (to which this Policy is subordinate)
- Reporting and Precautionary Actions Policy
- Case Outcomes Policy
- Behaviour, Health and Practice Appeals Policy
- Behaviour, Health and Practice Panels Policy

- Return to Study Policy
- Reconsideration of Concluded Student Casework Decisions (New Evidence) Procedure
- Definitions Document
- Investigation procedures, triage arrangements, evidence standards, and all other operational guidance as set out in schedules and subordinate instruments.

24. Legal and Regulatory Alignment

This Policy is designed to ensure compliance with:

- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023
- Safeguarding frameworks
- Consumer protection law
- Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework
- Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration
- Common law duties as a reasonably competent higher education institution

25. Governance, Ownership, Monitoring, and Review

Delegated Authority and Institutional Oversight

Fitness to practice decisions are made under delegated authority from the Vice-Chancellor and Academic Board.

Governance bodies maintain oversight through mechanisms such as regular reporting on fitness to practice cases, equality monitoring, and policy review, ensuring accountability and alignment with the University's strategic commitments to safeguarding student welfare and upholding professional standards.

Monitoring and Equality Analysis

The operation of this Policy will be monitored through regular reporting and periodic review, including equality impact considerations, to ensure ongoing compliance with regulatory and sector expectations.

The University will:

- Monitor aggregate data on fitness to practice cases (numbers, types, outcomes, timelines, appeals)
- Monitor for equality issues, including whether particular student groups are disproportionately represented

- Use findings to inform training, process adjustments, and policy development

Ownership and oversight

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Equality Analysis:	Required
Approved by (committee and date):	LTSEC
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Senior Policy Owner:	Assistant Director (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience)
Policy Author:	Head of Student Casework and Insight
Overseeing committee:	Academic Board
Compliance measures:	Sector benchmarking Case monitoring and Insight Case data and analysis
Related policies, procedures and codes of practice:	Framework for Behaviour Health and Practice Fitness to Practice Policy Support to Study Policy Complaints Policy Behaviour and Health Appeals Policy
Related legislative and/or regulatory requirements	• OfS Regulatory Framework and conditions of registration, including Condition E6; • the Higher Education Act 2004 • OIA Scheme and OIA Good Practice Framework; • Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty; • UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018; • Freedom of Information Act 2000; • Consumer Rights Act 2015 and CMA consumer law guidance for higher education; • Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024; • Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023; • Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and Prevent Duty guidance; safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, including the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children; • Protection from Harassment Act 1997; • relevant criminal law and police liaison guidance; • Online Safety Act 2023;

	• Immigration Rules and UKVI Student Route requirements; • PSRB requirements for regulated programmes;
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26Version history

Version	Date	Summary of changes	Author
26_09_01	10/06/26	New – Full policy revision	Head of Student Casework and Insight

27. Schedules

The following Schedules form part of this Policy and should be read in conjunction with it:

Schedule 1: Misconduct Categories

Category	Misconduct Type	Sub-type / Examples	Typical Handling Level	Escalation & Notes
Behavioural Misconduct (Non-academic)	Disruptive or Disorderly Conduct	e.g. Minor anti-social behaviour disrupting classes or events; rowdy or drunken disorder causing nuisance	<i>Local/informal for first/minor instance (e.g. warning by tutor or hall warden); escalated if repeated or severe</i>	Repeat or serious disruption escalates to formal discipline. Minor one-off incidents (noise complaints, minor disorder) are often resolved by informal warnings or mediation at a local level. Persistent disorderly behaviour or incidents causing significant disturbance are treated as major misconduct (formal investigation, possible disciplinary hearing).
Behavioural Misconduct	Failure to Comply (Non-compliance)	e.g. Refusing to follow a reasonable instruction from staff; failing to identify oneself to security; breaching a previously imposed sanction	<i>Informal/local handling initially (reminder or warning); formal misconduct case if significant or persistent</i>	Escalates if persistent or deliberate. Continued non-compliance with staff requests or sanctions is taken seriously. Repeated or egregious disobedience will lead to formal disciplinary action (investigation by casework team, possibly panel), and sanctions up to suspension.

Category	Misconduct Type	Sub-type / Examples	Typical Handling Level	Escalation & Notes
Behavioural Misconduct	Property Damage & Vandalism	e.g. Vandalism, graffiti, breaking equipment, reckless damage to property	<i>Local resolution for minor accidental damage (pay for repairs); formal investigation for significant or intentional damage</i>	Severity and intent matter. Minor or accidental damage may be handled locally with a requirement to pay for repairs or a warning. Deliberate or large-scale damage is major misconduct, prompting formal disciplinary procedures. Severe cases can result in suspension/expulsion and financial compensation orders.
Behavioural Misconduct	Unauthorised Use of Property or Facilities	e.g. Trespass – unauthorised entry into restricted areas; using university premises or equipment without permission	<i>Local warning or minor sanction if no harm (e.g. asked to leave area); formal disciplinary action if serious breach</i>	Depends on risk. Simple unauthorised use (e.g. staying in a lab after hours) might get a local reprimand, but if it presents a security/safety risk or involves theft, it becomes major misconduct investigated centrally. Repeat offences lead to stronger sanctions.
Behavioural Misconduct	Theft or Unauthorised Taking	e.g. Stealing property belonging to the University or another person	<i>Formal disciplinary investigation (central case team); possible panel hearing for serious theft</i>	Always treated as serious (major misconduct). Theft is typically major misconduct carrying heavy sanctions (suspension or expulsion). If the theft is criminal (significant value or nature), police referral is common alongside internal action.

Category	Misconduct Type	Sub-type / Examples	Typical Handling Level	Escalation & Notes
Behavioural Misconduct	Fraud, Misrepresentation & Deception (non-academic)	e.g. false representation or impersonation (using another's ID/card/account); forging or altering documents (letters, certificates, medical/mitigation evidence, references) for advantage; Certification and qualification fraud (using falsified documents to claim a qualification); dishonest claims (refunds, hardship support, accommodation or insurance); providing misleading information to staff, investigators or placement providers	<i>Usually formal disciplinary investigation (central case team); minor low-impact misrepresentation may be addressed locally if clearly inadvertent</i>	Typically treated as major misconduct. Deception undermines trust and institutional processes. Cases involving intent, planning, document falsification, identity misuse, or significant gain/harm are likely to escalate to a disciplinary panel and may trigger external reporting (e.g. police) where criminal thresholds are met. Outcomes can include suspension/expulsion and recovery of losses/benefits.
Behavioural Misconduct	Health & Safety Breaches	e.g. Breaching safety rules, causing or risking harm (tampering with fire alarms; ignoring lab safety protocols)	<i>Varies: Minor unintentional breach handled by local safety officer; serious/deliberate breach by formal disciplinary process</i>	H&S violations escalate with risk level. Significant disregard for safety (endangering others, deliberate tampering) is major misconduct requiring formal central investigation and likely a disciplinary panel. Lower-level incidents (careless error) may be resolved with a warning or safety training, but repeated issues prompt formal action.
Behavioural Misconduct	Substance Misuse (Drugs & Alcohol)	e.g. Possession or use of illegal drugs on campus; supplying	<i>Formal disciplinary case (especially drug offences);</i>	Illegal drug involvement is major misconduct. Cases of drug

Category	Misconduct Type	Sub-type / Examples	Typical Handling Level	Escalation & Notes
		controlled substances (criminal offences); alcohol-related misconduct (public disorder due to intoxication)	<i>minor alcohol-related issues initially local if only health/safety concern</i>	possession or supply are always serious and often result in a formal panel hearing and likely external referral to police. Alcohol misuse per se may not be disciplined unless it leads to misconduct or safety issues; then it's handled under relevant misconduct category (e.g. disorderly conduct or H&S breach) with escalation as appropriate.
Harassment, Bullying & Discrimination (non-sexual)	Harassment/Hate Behaviour	e.g. Bullying or intimidation; targeting someone with slurs or abusive comments related to protected characteristics (race, gender, disability, etc.); hate incidents or hate crimes on campus or online	<i>Formal investigation by specialist or central case team; often a disciplinary panel due to seriousness</i>	Generally treated as serious misconduct (often categorized as <i>major</i>). Even one instance of harassment or discrimination can warrant formal disciplinary action, given legal obligations (Equality Act 2010). Minor interpersonal issues or misunderstandings might be addressed through informal resolution or mediation if appropriate, but deliberate bullying/harassment escalates rapidly. Repeat or severe cases (or any hate crime) lead to high-level panels and possible expulsion; criminal harassment/stalking may involve police.

Category	Misconduct Type	Sub-type / Examples	Typical Handling Level	Escalation & Notes
Harassment, Bullying & Discrimination	Online or Cyber Misconduct	e.g. Cyberbullying or abusive social media posts targeting others; sharing offensive or illegal content online; creating fake profiles to harass; breaches of IT use policies	<i>Varies: Minor online misconduct (e.g. single offensive post) may prompt informal warning or removal of content; serious cases are formally investigated by central team</i>	Handled similarly to in-person misconduct. Online harassment or threats towards others are treated as misconduct under harassment policies (formal action for serious cases). IT system misuse (hacking, unauthorized data access, spreading malware) is major and handled by formal procedures with potential loss of IT access or expulsion.
Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Harassment or Violence	e.g. Unwanted sexual comments or touching, stalking with sexual intent; sexual assault or rape	<i>Formal disciplinary process (specialist investigators & panel); precautionary measures by senior managers pending outcome</i>	Always treated as very serious. Sexual misconduct is invariably major misconduct, invoking robust procedures in line with OfS Condition E6 requirements. Universities often liaise with police for allegations of sexual assault and may pause internal hearings during criminal investigations. Interim measures (no-contact orders, suspension) are applied by senior officers to protect parties. If proven via internal process, expulsion is a common outcome.
Off-Campus Misconduct	Off-Campus Offences & Disrepute	e.g. Criminal activity off-campus (assault, theft, drug dealing) involving a student;	<i>Depends on severity & link to university: Minor community issues handled</i>	University jurisdiction extends to off-campus behaviour if it affects the university community or

Category	Misconduct Type	Sub-type / Examples	Typical Handling Level	Escalation & Notes
		serious anti-social behaviour in the community; conduct that brings the University into disrepute (public misconduct while identified as a student)	<i>with local liaison (e.g. warnings in cooperation with authorities); serious incidents go to formal university discipline (central case team/panel)</i>	reputation. Serious off-campus offences (especially criminal charges) usually prompt immediate suspension and formal disciplinary action once feasible. Universities often coordinate with police investigations and may delay internal proceedings to avoid prejudicing criminal processes. For minor off-site incidents (e.g. noise complaints), a community or local intervention may suffice initially.
Misuse of Processes	Vexatious or Malicious Complaints	e.g. Making deliberately false allegations against staff or students; persistent vexatious complaints or appeals without merit	<i>Formal disciplinary process (central handling; possible senior officer review)</i>	Considered serious misconduct (major). Universities typically issue warnings or restrictions for first instances, but continued misuse of processes leads to formal hearings and sanctions (e.g. suspension of complaint rights, disciplinary penalties). Institutions ensure complaints were indeed malicious (not good faith) before acting.
Professional and Placement Conduct	Fitness to Practice Concerns	e.g. Misconduct by a student on a professional course (medicine, teaching, law) that breaches professional standards or calls suitability	<i>Usually handled under Fitness to Practice procedure (special panel including</i>	Separate procedure applies. For students in regulated professions, serious misconduct or fitness concerns are often addressed via a dedicated Fitness to Practice

Category	Misconduct Type	Sub-type / Examples	Typical Handling Level	Escalation & Notes
		into question – such as unethical behaviour on placement, dishonesty, or criminal offences	<i>faculty/professional representatives</i>	panel (which may impose sanctions up to removal from the course). This may run instead of, or parallel to, general disciplinary process depending on the case. Professional regulators may be informed in severe cases (e.g. GMC for medical students).
Professional and Placement Conduct	Conduct Unbecoming	e.g. behaviour on programmes with a clear professional standards component, or which may lead to or allow professional registration, that falls below expected standards of integrity, judgement, respect, or responsibility, even where the course is not formally PSRB- or ARB-regulated; this may include inappropriate conduct on placement, serious unprofessional behaviour towards peers, staff or service users, or conduct that undermines suitability for progression to a profession	<i>Usually handled through formal misconduct procedures, with referral to a faculty or programme-level panel where professional suitability is engaged</i>	Applies where no dedicated Fitness to Practice regime exists. This category captures professional-style misconduct on programmes that are not formally regulated by a PSRB or ARB but nonetheless prepare students for roles requiring public trust, ethical conduct, or later professional registration. Cases may be considered under the general disciplinary framework, with enhanced regard to professional standards, placement expectations, reputational issues, and suitability for progression. Serious or repeated cases may justify suspension, termination of placement access, or removal from the programme where the regulations allow.

Category	Misconduct Type	Sub-type / Examples	Typical Handling Level	Escalation & Notes
Wellbeing and Fitness to Study	Concerning Behaviour (Health-related)	e.g. Behaviour suggesting a student is unable to meet conduct expectations due to health/mental wellbeing issues (outbursts or safety risks stemming from a health condition)	<i>Handled via Support/Fitness to Study procedure (welfare-led assessment by student support or panel)</i>	Not a disciplinary category per se, but universities may use Fitness and support to Study procedures instead of discipline when misconduct is linked to serious mental health or welfare issues. This ensures a supportive approach (e.g. wellbeing action plan or <i>health-related suspension</i>), rather than punishment. Disciplinary action may resume if the student's behaviour remains problematic after support interventions are in place.

Schedule 2: Definitions

This Policy uses terms that have specific meanings within the Behaviour, Health and Practice framework. Details can be found in the Framework for Student Behaviour, Health and Practice

Schedule 3: Precautionary Actions

The criteria, scope, procedures, decision-making authority, review mechanisms, and students' rights in relation to precautionary actions are set out in full in the **Reporting and Precautionary Actions Policy**.

Precautionary actions may be informed by PSRB requirements and public protection considerations.

Schedule 4: Case Panels

The composition, procedures, terms of reference, authority, and decision-making protocols for fitness to practice panels are set out in full in the **Behaviour, Health and Practice Panels Policy**.

Panels may include external professional representatives and operate in accordance with relevant PSRB requirements.

Schedule 5: Appeals

The grounds, procedural requirements, timescales, submission process, scope of review, composition of appeal panels, and outcomes available on appeal are fully set out in the **Behaviour, Health and Practice Appeals Policy**.

Schedule 6: Outcomes

The range of available outcomes, criteria and principles governing their imposition, authority to impose outcomes, review and compliance arrangements, and implications of non-compliance are set below.

Outcomes may include requirements to meet professional standards, referral to or notification of PSRBs, and conditions necessary to protect the public.

Outcomes and Sanctions Matrix

Purpose and Use of the Matrix

This matrix provides a comprehensive ladder of potential outcomes and sanctions, starting from the least restrictive and escalating to the most serious (permanent expulsion with no right to return). It is applicable across all three frameworks, with framework-specific notes and language provided where necessary.

The matrix is indicative and non-exhaustive. Decision-makers retain discretion to apply outcomes individually or in combination, and to tailor outcomes to the specific circumstances of each case.

The Matrix

Level	Outcome/Sanction Type	Description and Examples	Conduct	Duration / Notes
0	No further action / Not proven / Case closed	Allegation not proven on the balance of probabilities (Conduct/FtP); or assessment determines no formal outcome necessary (Support to Study); or outcome not proportionate.	✓	N/A
1	Informal resolution / No formal sanction	Matter resolved informally (e.g., through mediation, coaching, conversation, signposting to support). No formal finding or sanction recorded.	✓	N/A
2	Verbal warning / Expectations reminder	Oral reminder of expected standards and behaviours. May be delivered by senior staff, personal tutor, or case officer. Not recorded as a formal sanction.	✓	N/A
3	Written warning (Level 1)	Formal written warning confirming breach/concern and setting out expected future conduct. Remains on record for a defined period (e.g., remainder of studies or up to 12 months).	✓	Typically 12 months or remainder of registration
4	Acceptable Behaviour Contract / Action Plan	Written agreement setting out expectations, support arrangements, and review milestones. Used to support behaviour change and monitor progress.	✓ (Acceptable Behaviour Contract)	Typically 3-12 months with regular review
5	Formal reprimand	Formal written reprimand marking seriousness of breach. Remains on student record for a defined period.	✓	Typically remainder of studies
6	Apology	Requirement to provide a written or (where appropriate and agreed) verbal apology to affected individual(s). Only where appropriate	✓	One-off requirement

Level	Outcome/Sanction Type	Description and Examples	Conduct	Duration / Notes
		and safe; never mandated in harassment/sexual misconduct cases without victim consent.		
7	Confiscation of items	Confiscation of prohibited or dangerous items (e.g., drugs, weapons, unsafe equipment) for safety or compliance reasons.	✓	Permanent or time-limited
8	Attendance on educative/reflective programme	Requirement to complete training, workshop, or programme (e.g., consent education, professional ethics, substance awareness). Cost may be borne by the student where proportionate.	✓	Cost and duration specified; completion required
9	Restorative justice / Restorative practice	Facilitated process aimed at repairing harm and relationships through dialogue (direct or indirect). Only available: - Where both/all parties consent. - In harassment/sexual misconduct cases, only where explicitly requested by the reporting student and assessed as safe and appropriate. - Never appropriate as sole outcome in serious sexual misconduct cases.	✓ (optional)	Victim-led; trauma-informed facilitation required
10	Short-term access restriction	Temporary restriction from specific facilities, buildings, or areas of campus (e.g., library, gym, specific building).	✓	Up to 7 days
11	Time-limited access restriction	Restriction from specific facilities, services, or campus areas for a defined period (e.g., up to one academic term).	✓	Up to one term
12	IT or system restrictions	Restriction or suspension of access to IT systems, networks, or online platforms where misuse has occurred.	✓	Time-limited or until conditions met

Level	Outcome/Sanction Type	Description and Examples	Conduct	Duration / Notes
13	Non-contact arrangement	Formal requirement that the student has no contact (direct or indirect, including via social media or third parties) with specified individual(s). Essential in harassment/sexual misconduct cases.	✓	Duration specified; breach is serious escalation
14	Exclusion from specific activities or events	Prohibition from attending or participating in specific activities, events, trips, placements, or extracurricular activities.	✓	Time-limited or permanent
15	Reparation / Restitution	Requirement to pay compensation or make good loss or damage caused to the University or an individual. Amount must be calculated and justified.	✓	Must specify: loss, calculation, payment timeline
16	Financial penalty (fine)	Monetary penalty up to £1,000 (or maximum determined by Directorate). Used sparingly; exists partly as deterrent. Revenue to Student Hardship Fund. Non-payment treated as University debt. Must record: why fine necessary, why non-financial sanction insufficient, proportionality considering hardship.	✓ (rare; case-specific)	Up to £1,000
17	Suspension from specific placement, module, or activity	Temporary or permanent removal from a placement, practice setting, module, or clinical/professional activity where fitness, conduct, or risk concerns arise.	✓	Time-limited or permanent
18	Suspension from University (time-limited)	Temporary exclusion from the University (all or specified parts of campus, activities, and teaching) for a defined period. Used where serious breach or risk requires temporary	✓	Specified period (e.g., one term, one academic year)

Level	Outcome/Sanction Type	Description and Examples	Conduct	Duration / Notes
		removal. Student remains registered but cannot attend.		
19	Mandatory interruption of studies / Withdrawal from registration (time-limited)	Requirement to interrupt studies and withdraw from registration for a defined period. Used in Support to Study cases where student needs time away to address health, wellbeing, or capacity concerns; also available in Conduct/FtP for serious cases. Conditions for return must be specified.	✓ (termed "interruption" or "suspension")	Time-limited; conditions for return specified
20	Expulsion from one course with permission to register on another (non-qualifying) course	Permanent removal from a specific course (e.g., a professional, clinical, or qualifying programme) due to fitness to practise or conduct concerns, but permission granted to register on a different (typically non-professional/non-qualifying) course at the University.	✓ (rare; case-specific)	Permanent exclusion from named course; eligibility for alternative course specified
21	Exclusion from a course or profession (with possible re-entry elsewhere)	Permanent exclusion from a specific professional programme, course, or field of study (e.g., healthcare, teaching, social work) at this University, due to fitness to practise or serious conduct breach. Student may be eligible to apply to another institution or for a different course/profession, depending on circumstances.	✓ (use in serious/persistent cases)	Permanent exclusion from specified course/programme; portability to other institutions not guaranteed but not prohibited
22	Time-limited expulsion (with possible re-entry after review)	Expulsion from the University for a defined period (e.g., 1-3 years), after which the student may apply for readmission, subject to meeting specified conditions and demonstrating changed circumstances, insight, and fitness to return. Registration is terminated.	✓	Time-limited (specify period); conditions for re-entry application clearly set out

Level	Outcome/Sanction Type	Description and Examples	Conduct	Duration / Notes
23	Permanent expulsion (with no right to return)	Permanent termination of registration and expulsion from the University with no right to return at any time. Reserved for the most serious cases where: - The conduct or risk is so serious that the student cannot safely or appropriately remain part of the University community. - There is no realistic prospect of safe return or fitness to study. - Lesser sanctions are insufficient to protect individuals or the University.	✓ (most serious cases only)	Permanent; no re-entry possible

Framework-Specific Notes on the Matrix

Conduct Cases

- Outcomes from Levels 1-16 may be applied individually or in combination depending on seriousness and escalation factors.
- Restorative justice (Level 9) is encouraged where appropriate, but only with victim consent in harassment/sexual misconduct cases.
- Fines (Level 16) should be used sparingly and justified clearly.
- Expulsion outcomes (Levels 22-23) are reserved for gross misconduct, serious harm, persistent breaches, or where protection cannot otherwise be achieved.

Escalation Thresholds and Aggravating Factors

When to Escalate

Decision-makers should escalate to a higher level of outcome where **one or more** of the following escalation thresholds are present:

Escalation Threshold	Description	Examples
Significant harm or impact	Serious harm (physical, psychological, emotional, financial, academic, or reputational) caused to individuals or the community.	Assault; sustained harassment; serious distress; significant financial loss; damage to professional reputation or public trust.
Repeat or persistent behaviour	Previous findings, warnings, or outcomes; pattern of behaviour despite earlier interventions.	Breach of Acceptable Behaviour Contract; repeat harassment after warning; multiple incidents.
Deliberate intent or premeditation	Behaviour was planned, calculated, or deliberate rather than reckless or negligent.	Premeditated harassment; planned cheating; deliberate breach of restrictions.
Misuse of power or position	Exploitation of authority, trust, or positional advantage.	Staff-student relationship misconduct; abuse of peer mentor or representative role.
Criminality indicators	Behaviour has criminal characteristics or has resulted in police involvement or conviction. (Note: University determines code breaches, not criminal guilt.)	Assault; theft; fraud; hate crime; sexual offences; drug supply.
Safeguarding or serious risk	Significant risk to vulnerable individuals, children, or others requiring protective action.	Risk to placement patients/service users; safeguarding concerns; threat of violence.
Lack of insight or engagement	Student shows no understanding of impact, refuses to engage, or denies responsibility despite evidence.	Refusal to attend meetings; denial despite clear evidence; blame-shifting; lack of remorse.
Breach of previous outcome or restriction	Non-compliance with earlier sanction, contract, or protective measure.	Contact with individual despite non-contact order; failure to complete required training; breach of exclusion.

Decision Factors: What Panels and Decision-Makers Must Consider

Mandatory Considerations

In determining outcomes, decision-makers must consider and record (briefly, in the written rationale) the following factors:

a) Nature and seriousness of the behaviour or concern

What standard, policy, or professional requirement was breached? How serious is the breach in context?

b) Impact and harm caused

What harm was caused to individuals (including the reporting party), the community, the University, or (in Fitness to Practise cases) patients or the public? Consider physical, psychological, emotional, financial, academic, and reputational harm.

c) Intent and degree of responsibility

Was the behaviour deliberate, reckless, negligent, or unintentional? Was there premeditation or misuse of power?

d) Pattern, persistence, and compliance

Is this a first incident or part of a pattern? Has the student complied with earlier outcomes, support plans, or restrictions? Is there evidence of repeat behaviour despite interventions?

e) Risk and protection needs

What is the current level of risk to the student, others, or the University? Are restrictions, non-contact arrangements, or removal necessary to manage risk?

f) Engagement, insight, and likelihood of change

Has the student cooperated with the process? Do they demonstrate understanding, acceptance of responsibility, and insight into the impact of their behaviour? Is there evidence of learning or genuine commitment to change?

g) Mitigating circumstances

Are there relevant, evidenced mitigating factors (e.g., health conditions, personal circumstances, first offence)? Mitigation affects the **severity of the sanction**, not the **standard of proof** or the finding itself.

h) Consistency with previous cases

Have similar cases resulted in similar outcomes? Decision-makers should consider (but are not bound by) outcomes in comparable cases to promote consistency, whilst recognising that each case turns on its own facts.

Special Considerations: Trauma-Informed and Victim-Led Practice in Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Cases

Principles

Cases involving harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual violence, hate crime, or discriminatory abuse require trauma-informed, victim-led approaches that:

- Prioritise the safety, autonomy, and wellbeing of the reporting student.
- Recognise the impact of trauma on memory, engagement, and participation.
- Avoid secondary harm through insensitive processes or assumptions.
- Respect the reporting student's choices about process, outcomes, and engagement (within the bounds of the University's duty to protect the community).

Restorative Justice and Informal Outcomes

Restorative justice, mediation, or informal resolution must not be offered, suggested, or pursued in cases of serious harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or sexual violence unless:

- Explicitly requested by the reporting student, and
- Assessed by appropriately trained staff as safe, appropriate, and in the reporting student's interests, and
- Facilitated by a trauma-informed practitioner with specialist training.

Even where requested, restorative justice must never be the sole outcome in serious sexual misconduct cases. It may only be used alongside formal sanctions or protective measures.

Anonymous and Third-Party Reporting

Where incidents are reported anonymously or by third parties:

- The University retains a duty to assess and respond to risk.
- Protective measures (e.g., restrictions, non-contact arrangements, referral to Fitness to Practise or Support to Study) may be necessary even without a formal complaint.

- Outcomes must be proportionate to the information available and the level of risk identified.
- The University will not pursue disciplinary action solely on the basis of anonymous reports where there is insufficient evidence to meet the balance of probabilities, but may take precautionary or risk-management action where appropriate.

Financial Outcomes: Fines and Reparation

Reparation and Restitution

Reparation may be required where misconduct has caused quantifiable loss or damage to the University or an individual (e.g., damaged property, theft, costs incurred).

Recording requirements:

- Specify the loss or damage being repaired.
- Show how the amount is calculated.
- Set a clear payment timeline.

Fines (Financial Penalties)

Fines up to £1,000 (or a maximum set by the Directorate) may be imposed in Conduct and (sparingly) Fitness to Practise cases.

Principles:

- The University recognises student financial hardship.
- Fines should not be used regularly; they exist partly as a deterrent.
- Revenue from fines is added to the Student Hardship Fund.
- Non-payment is treated as a debt to the University.

Recording requirements: Decision-makers imposing a fine must record:

- Why a fine is necessary (e.g., to mark seriousness, deter similar conduct).
- Why a non-financial sanction alone is insufficient.
- Where both fine and restitution are imposed, why the combined financial impact is proportionate (avoid double-counting).

Recording Decisions: Minimum Requirements

1 Written Rationale

All outcome decisions must be accompanied by a written rationale (in the decision record, panel minutes, or outcome letter) that includes:

a) Findings

- What was proven or not proven (Conduct/Fitness to Practise), on the balance of probabilities.
- What concerns were established (Support to Study).

b) Starting point

- What level of the matrix was considered first, and why.

c) Key factors considered

- Brief commentary on each of the **decision factors** (section 7) relevant to the case.

d) Outcome(s) chosen and why proportionate

- What outcome(s) have been imposed.
- **Why a lower outcome is insufficient** (where escalation has occurred).
- How the chosen outcome is proportionate to the behaviour, impact, risk, and circumstances.

e) Financial outcomes (if any)

- Calculation and basis for restitution.
- Amount of fine (≤£1,000), and rationale for why necessary and proportionate, with reference to deterrence, hardship fund, and debt treatment principles.

f) Duration, conditions, monitoring, and consequences of breach

- **What** the student must do or not do.
- **How long** the outcome applies.
- **How compliance will be monitored.**
- **What will happen if the outcome is breached** (e.g., escalation, further proceedings).

g) Communication and appeal

- Confirmation that the outcome letter includes reasons and details of the appeal route, grounds, and deadline (where applicable).

Clarity and Workability

Outcomes must be **clear, specific, and workable**. Vague or unenforceable outcomes undermine fairness and protection. Where conditions or restrictions are imposed, they must be sufficiently detailed to enable compliance and monitoring.

Framework-Specific Guidance: Applying the Policy in Practice

Student Conduct

Purpose

Conduct outcomes are **educative, corrective, and protective**. They mark the seriousness of the breach, promote learning and behaviour change, deter future misconduct, and protect the University community. **Typical case types and indicative outcome ranges**

Misconduct Type	Examples	Low-Level Range (First Offence / Minor)	Mid-Level Range (Moderate / Some Aggravating Factors)	High-Level Range (Serious / Aggravated / Repeat)
Behavioural misconduct	Disruptive behaviour; minor policy breaches; failure to comply with reasonable instructions.	Levels 2-5 (warning, contract, action plan)	Levels 10-13 (restrictions, non-contact, reprimand)	Levels 18-23 (suspension, expulsion)
Bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour	Verbal abuse; discriminatory language; harassment (including sexual harassment); hate incidents.	Levels 3-9 (warning, contract, education, restorative only with victim consent)	Levels 11-16 (restrictions, non-contact, exclusion from activities)	Levels 18-23 (suspension, expulsion; mandatory in serious sexual misconduct or hate crime)
Substance misuse	Possession/use of illegal drugs; alcohol-related misconduct.	Levels 2-8 (warning, education programme)	Levels 11-14 (restrictions from accommodation/events, probationary conditions)	Levels 18-23 (expulsion; police referral where supply/distribution)
Damage to property	Vandalism; negligent or deliberate damage.	Levels 3-15 (warning, restitution)	Levels 11-16 (restrictions, restitution + fine)	Levels 18-23 (where deliberate/malicious intent, major impact, or repetition)

IT misuse (including cyberbullying)	Unauthorised access; cyberbullying; prohibited content.	Levels 3-12 (warning, IT restriction, training)	Levels 11-16 (extended restrictions, probationary conditions)	Levels 18-23 (where criminal conduct, significant harm/data breach, or repeat)
Criminal-type conduct	Theft; assault; fraud; hate crimes; sexual offences.	Levels 17-18 (temporary suspension ; restorative only in minor cases with victim consent)	Levels 18-21 (suspension, course exclusion, external referral)	Levels 22-23 (expulsion; mandatory for serious harm, conviction, or safeguarding risk)
Safety violations	Fire safety breaches; endangering others.	Levels 2-8 (warning, safety training)	Levels 11-17 (restrictions/suspension from facilities)	Levels 18-23 (where deliberate endangerment or repeated breaches despite warnings)

Key principles

- Apply the least restrictive sufficient outcome.
- In harassment and sexual misconduct cases, adopt trauma-informed, victim-led approaches and ensure restorative options are only pursued with explicit victim consent.
- Fines should be used sparingly and justified clearly.
- Expulsion outcomes (Levels 22-23) are reserved for gross misconduct, serious harm, persistent breaches, or where protection cannot otherwise be achieved.

Combining Outcomes

Principle

Outcomes may be applied **individually or in combination** where this is proportionate and necessary to achieve the aims of protection, learning, risk management, and (where relevant) marking seriousness.

Common Combinations (Examples)

Combination	Rationale	Frameworks
Written warning + educative programme + non-contact arrangement	Marks seriousness, promotes learning, and protects affected individual.	Conduct, Fitness to Practise
Restitution + fine	Repairs loss and marks seriousness/deters similar conduct. Must justify why both needed.	Conduct
Suspension from placement + action plan + return conditions	Protects patients/service users whilst enabling student to demonstrate improved fitness.	Fitness to Practise
Action plan + access restrictions + non-contact arrangement	Provides support and structure whilst managing risk to others.	Support to Study
Time-limited expulsion + conditions for return application	Marks extreme seriousness but recognises possibility of change and rehabilitation.	Conduct, Fitness to Practise

Schedule 6: Return to Study

The principles, criteria, processes, and decision-making arrangements governing when and how a student may resume study following interruption or restriction are set out in the Return to Study Policy.

Return to study decisions may take account of professional standards, placement requirements, and PSRB expectations.