

Fitness to Study Policy

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Department / Function: Academic Quality and Standards

Owner: Register, Mr Stephen Plant

Oversight committee: Academic Board

Approving body: Academic Board (recommended)/ Board of Governors (final approval)

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Regularity alignment with office for students (OfS) conditions

This Fitness to Study Policy forms part of the London Academy for Applied Technology's (LAAT) academic governance and student support framework and ensures that students are able to engage effectively and safely with their programme of study while maintaining academic standards, fairness, and institutional accountability.

The policy aligns with **OfS Condition B1 (Academic Experience)** by ensuring that students are appropriately supported to participate in learning opportunities and that academic engagement is sustained in a manner consistent with quality teaching, learning, and support arrangements. Where concerns arise regarding a student's capacity to engage effectively with their studies, the policy provides a structured and supportive process to assess and address those concerns.

The policy also aligns with **OfS Condition B2 (Resources, Support and Student Engagement)** by ensuring that appropriate student support mechanisms are in place, including referral to wellbeing or external services where necessary, thereby safeguarding students' academic progression and welfare.

In accordance with **OfS Condition C1 (Consumer Protection Law)** and **C5 (Treating Students Fairly)**, the policy establishes clear, transparent, and consistently applied procedures, ensuring that students are informed of concerns, provided with an opportunity to respond, and supported throughout the process. Decisions are proportionate, evidence-based, and communicated clearly in writing.

The implementation of this policy further supports compliance with **OfS Conditions E2 (Management and Governance)** and **E3 (Accountability)** by ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, decisions are appropriately authorised and documented, and oversight mechanisms are in place through LAAT's academic governance structures.

This policy is implemented through LAAT's academic registry, student support services, and quality assurance arrangements to ensure consistency, fairness, student protection, and maintenance of academic standards.

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

This policy sets out London Academy for Applied Technology's (LAAT) approach to **Fitness to Study**, including the **process for managing Fitness to Study cases**. Fitness to Study refers to a student's ability to engage safely and effectively with their programme of study while maintaining their own wellbeing and not adversely affecting the learning, wellbeing, or safety of others. The policy adopts a **supportive, proportionate, and non-disciplinary approach**, ensuring that students receive appropriate support while safeguarding academic standards and compliance with regulatory and legal requirements.

2. Scope

2.1 Applicability

This policy applies to all students enrolled on higher education programmes delivered by LAAT under franchised or validated arrangements, across all modes of study and teaching locations.

2.2 Exclusions and Precedence

This policy does not replace academic misconduct, disciplinary, or safeguarding procedures. Where a case involves immediate risk or misconduct, relevant procedures will take precedence.

Where there is any inconsistency between this policy and validating partner regulations, the validating partner's requirements will take precedence.

3. Definitions

- **Fitness to Study:** A student's ability to participate fully and safely in academic life, including engagement with learning, assessment, and university life, without posing a significant risk to themselves or others.
- **Fitness to Study Concern:** A situation where a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour, or engagement raises concerns about their ability to continue studying safely or effectively.
- **Support Plan:** An agreed set of actions and adjustments designed to support a student's continued engagement or safe return to study.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** Appropriate and proportionate modifications or support arrangements made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

4. Principles

LAAT applies the following principles in all Fitness to Study cases:

- **Supportive and preventative approach:** Early identification and support are prioritised.
- **Fairness and proportionality:** Responses are appropriate to the level of concern.
- **Inclusivity:** Reasonable adjustments are considered at all stages.
- **Transparency:** Processes and decisions are clearly communicated.
- **Confidentiality:** Information is handled sensitively and lawfully.
- **Regulatory compliance:** Decisions align with OfS and validating partner expectations.

5. Governance, Committees and Oversight

Strategic oversight is provided by the Board of Governors. Academic and operational oversight is delegated to the Academic Board.

The Academic Board will:

- Approve and periodically review this policy
- Monitor Fitness to Study cases and outcomes
- Receive assurance on consistency, fairness, and regulatory compliance

6. Policy Statement

6.1 Identification of Fitness to Study Concerns

Concerns may arise from:

- persistent non-engagement or attendance issues
- significant changes in behaviour or wellbeing
- health conditions impacting academic participation
- risk to self or others

6.2 Support-Focused Response

Fitness to Study is **not a disciplinary process**. LAAT's primary response is to provide support and explore reasonable adjustments.

6.3 Possible Outcomes

Depending on circumstances, outcomes may include:

- continued study with support plan
- reasonable adjustments
- referral to a Study Break
- requirement for evidence of fitness to return
- withdrawal (only where no other option is appropriate)

Process for Fitness to Study Cases (Procedure)

Stage 1 – Early Concern and Informal Support

- Concern identified by staff or student
- Student Support contacts student to discuss concerns
- Informal support and adjustments offered
- Case monitored

Stage 2 – Formal Fitness to Study Review

Triggered where:

- concerns persist, or
- risk increases, or
- informal support is ineffective

Actions:

- Formal meeting with student
- Evidence considered (where appropriate)
- Support plan agreed or revised
- Outcome confirmed in writing

Stage 3 – Enhanced Review / Temporary Interruption

Triggered where:

- continued study may pose risk
- student cannot engage despite support

Possible outcomes:

- compulsory Study Break
- conditions for return to study
- referral to other institutional processes

Stage 4 – Return to Study

- Student provides required evidence (e.g. medical confirmation)
- Return-to-study plan agreed
- Academic and pastoral support reinstated
- Progress monitored

Stage 5 – Record-Keeping and Review

- All decisions recorded securely
- Data handled in accordance with UK GDPR
- Cases reviewed for consistency and quality assurance

7. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

The detailed operational procedures for identifying, reviewing, managing, and resolving Fitness to Study cases are set out in **Appendix A**. The SOP ensures that concerns are managed in a consistent, transparent, supportive, and proportionate manner, and that decisions are taken in accordance with institutional, regulatory, and validating partner requirements. The SOP should be read in conjunction with this policy and relevant academic regulations.

8. Regulatory, Partner and Legal Alignment

This policy aligns with:

- **Plymouth Marjon University Student Regulations Framework**, including provisions relating to attendance, interruption of studies, withdrawal, and student wellbeing;

- **Office for Students Conditions of Registration**, in particular B2 (Information for Students), B4 (Fairness and Transparency), and C1 (Consumer Protection);
- **Equality Act 2010**; and
- **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)**.

9. Monitoring, Compliance and Review

Fitness to Study cases is monitored by the Student Support Team and reported to the Academic Board in an anonymised form as part of LAAT's quality assurance and student wellbeing oversight. This policy will be reviewed **annually**, or sooner where required due to regulatory, legal, or validating partner changes.

10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

LAAT will handle Fitness to Study cases sensitively and in accordance with data protection legislation. Information will be shared only on a **need-to-know basis**, and only where there is a lawful basis to do so.

Information may be shared where necessary:

- to safeguard the wellbeing or safety of the student or others;
- to enable appropriate academic or pastoral support;
- to meet legal, regulatory, or validating partner obligations.

All records will be stored securely and managed in accordance with **UK GDPR** and LAAT's data retention policies.

11. Student Representation and Support

Students involved in formal Fitness to Study processes may be accompanied to meetings by a supporter, where appropriate, in line with LAAT guidance.

Students will be provided with clear information about the process, possible outcomes, and available sources of support. LAAT will take reasonable steps to ensure that students understand decisions made and the actions required of them.

12. Responsible people/ roles include

- **Register (Policy Owner): Mr Stephen Plant**
Overall accountability for policy implementation
- **Head of Academic Quality: Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda**
Ensures policy compliance, documentation, and audit readiness.
- **Programme Lead: Mr Amarjeet Singh**
Academic advice, withdrawal review, approval oversight, compliance assurance
- **Student Support Officer: Ms Nadia Asim**
Responsible for operational monitoring and intervention.
- **Academic Staff**
Academic staff are responsible for the accurate and timely monitoring of student attendance and engagement.

- **Students**

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own attendance and engagement.

List of people and contacts

Role	Name	Contact email
Register	Mr Stephen Plant	Stephen.plant@laat.ac.uk
Head of Academic Quality	Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda	Vishwanath.kokkonda@laat.ac.uk
Programme Lead	Mr Amarjeet Singh	Amarjeet.singh@laat.ac.uk
Student support officer	Ms Nadia Asim	nadiaasim@laat.ac.uk

13. List of Document

- Fitness to Study Concern Referral Form
- Fitness to Study Assessment Meeting Record Form
- Fitness to Study Decision Record Form
- Fitness to Study Outcome Notification Letter Template
- Student Code of Conduct Policy
- Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy
- Study Break / Interruption of Studies Policy

14. Evidence

- Fitness to Study Concern Referral Form
- Fitness to Study Assessment Meeting Record Form
- Fitness to Study Decision Record Form
- Fitness to Study Outcome Notification Letter Template
- Student Code of Conduct Policy
- Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy
- Study Break / Interruption of Studies Policy

Mapping table for evidence items related to OfS conditions

Evidence Item	Purpose / What it Demonstrates	Relevant OfS Condition(s)
Fitness to Study Concern Referral Form	Provides a structured and documented mechanism for raising concerns regarding a student's ability to engage safely and effectively with their studies, ensuring early identification and risk management	B1 (academic experience), B2 (resources and student support), E2 (management and governance)
Fitness to Study Assessment	Demonstrates fair, proportionate, and evidence-based review of concerns,	C5 (treating students fairly), B2 (student

Meeting Record Form	ensuring students are given an opportunity to respond and appropriate support measures are considered	support), E3 (accountability)
Fitness to Study Decision Record Form	Provides formal documentation of institutional decisions, including rationale and authorisation, ensuring governance oversight and audit trail	E2 (management and governance), E3 (accountability)
Fitness to Study Outcome Notification Letter Template	Ensures clear written communication of decisions, conditions, and review mechanisms, supporting transparency and consumer protection obligations	C1 (consumer protection law), C5 (treating students fairly)
Student Code of Conduct Policy	Establishes behavioural standards and procedural fairness in addressing conduct-related concerns that may intersect with fitness to study matters	C5 (treating students fairly), E2 (management and governance), B1 (academic experience)
Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy	Demonstrates institutional commitment to student welfare, risk assessment, and appropriate support mechanisms where wellbeing impacts academic engagement	B2 (resources and student support), C5 (fair treatment)

Appendix A – Fitness to Study Procedure

A1. Purpose

This procedure sets out the operational steps for managing Fitness to Study concerns in a consistent, supportive, and proportionate manner.

A2. Stage 1 – Early Concern and Informal Support

- Concern identified by staff, student, or third party
- Student Support contacts the student
- Informal support and reasonable adjustments explored
- Case monitored and reviewed

A3. Stage 2 – Formal Fitness to Study Review

Triggered where concerns persist or risk increases.

- Formal meeting with the student
- Relevant evidence considered where appropriate
- Support plan agreed or revised
- Outcome confirmed in writing

A4. Stage 3 – Enhanced Review / Temporary Interruption

Triggered where continued study may pose risk or engagement is not possible.

- Possible compulsory Study Break
- Conditions for return to study defined

- Referral to related policies if required

A5. Stage 4 – Return to Study

- Evidence of fitness to return reviewed (where required)
- Return-to-study plan agreed
- Academic and pastoral support reinstated
- Progress monitored

A6. Stage 5 – Record-Keeping and Quality Assurance

- Decisions recorded securely
- Data handled in line with UK GDPR
- Cases reviewed for consistency and learning