



UNIVERSITY
of York

Supporting students: a guide for staff

Your guide to helping students access the right support:

What should you look out for

What should you do

What happens next



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Introduction

Any University of York staff member who interacts with students, regardless of their role, may be approached by a student and asked for help and advice. You are not expected to offer counselling or know the answer to every question but you should be able to signpost the student to the appropriate support services.

There is a lot of advice and guidance about [supporting students](#) available on the staff web pages. This guide summarises that advice so you can help students access the right specialist advice and support.

Confidentiality

Information relating to students **must not be released to a third party outside the University** (including relatives) without the explicit consent of the student.

If anyone makes a disclosure to you which indicates they or others are at risk of harm, you should pass this information onto the appropriate student support services. The information will be treated as confidentially and as sensitively as possible.

Areas of increased risk of harm include :

1. Safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children (ie, students under 18)
2. Inappropriate relationships, including sexual assault
3. Abuse of trust
4. Prevent (radicalisation)
5. Complex mental health difficulties

When a student has a mental health or psychological difficulty

We have a duty of care to provide support for students experiencing difficulties. Students with mild anxiety should be directed to their [College team](#) or the [health and wellbeing](#) self-help resources on the website. However, if their emotions become overwhelming and impact on their studies they may need additional support.

What should you look out for?

We want to make sure all students get the help they need.

Ask yourself: Is there a change? Do they seem different? Is there a difference in their work? Has their attendance dropped? Are they behaving in a way that indicates there is something wrong?

Ask them: How are you, can I help?

What should you do?

- 1. When a student requires support but is not at immediate risk.**
Direct the student to complete the [online referral form](#) for Open Door. Even when a student is distressed, they should be encouraged to complete the form.
If possible, give the student access to a computer there and then. Assure them that they will be contacted by Open Door within two working days.
- 2. If a student is not able to engage with the online referral form and you need advice on how to proceed.**
Contact the Open Door team for advice from 9am to 10pm on weekdays (10am to 4pm during holidays). The team will suggest a course of action and sometimes the student may be seen on the same day.
Tel: 01904 32 2140
Email: opendoor@york.ac.uk
- 3. In crisis now! If the student is in immediate danger of hurting themselves or someone else.**
On campus - telephone Security on 01904 32 3333
Off campus - telephone emergency services on 999

What happens next?

After the student completes the online form, they will be contacted with a tailored offer of support. Open Door offer a range of services from workshops through to one-to-one sessions with a mental health practitioner. If it's a crisis situation or out-of-hours and Security is involved, they will pass the details onto Open Door to ensure the team can follow up and offer the student longer-term support if needed.

When a student has a disability or long-term health condition

All students are entitled to an inclusive learning experience that removes barriers and enables participation. Some students declare a disability, some choose not to, and still others may not have a diagnosis.

What should you look out for?

Look out for student who regularly submit work late, seem to struggle with written elements of their course, display perfectionist tendencies or frustration at the marks they are receiving as they could potentially benefit from some additional support.

What should you do?

Disabilities affect different people in different ways so the support offered by Disability Services is flexible and tailored to each individual. Students with disabilities should be directed to the [Student Disability Support webpage](#).

Encourage the student to contact the Disability team.

Web: york.ac.uk/disability

Tel: 01904 324785

Email: disabilityservices@york.ac.uk

What happens next?

After contacting the team, the student will be asked for medical evidence of the disability and will then be given an appointment to speak with a Disabilities Adviser. The Disabilities Adviser will work with the student to develop a Student Support Plan and ensure they are accessing any support available through Disabled Students' Allowance.

When a student does not feel settled or is struggling to adjust to university

Starting university is a time of great change and for many students it will be their first time away from home. It can be quite bewildering and it's not unusual for students to feel lost, lonely or homesick.

What should you look out for?

Students who feel they don't belong at university or that they don't fit in are likely to appear generally anxious or unhappy. They may be struggling to develop friendship networks.

What should you do?

Colleges are key to helping students settle into university.

1. **Encourage the student to talk to their College team.**
2. **Share your concerns with the student's Assistant Head of College.**

Web: york.ac.uk/students/health/help/college-support

What happens next?

If the student contacts the College team, they will help the student identify the problem and create an action plan. They will also signpost the student to additional support if needed.

If you contact the Assistant Head of College, they will contact the student and offer them the support outlined above.

Assistant Heads of College

Alcuin - Martin Crosby

Constantine - Jonny Lovell

Derwent - Keith Kinsella

Goodricke - Sarah Hay

Halifax - Cath Dickinson

James - Mike Britland

Langwith - Jonny Exon

Vanbrugh - Georgina Heath

Wentworth - Claire Anderson

When a student needs help with a finance query

What should you look out for?

Students with money worries could have difficulties in concentrating on their day-to-day activities and making the most of their time at University. Students may come to you because they do not know who to speak to about their student loan, fees, bursaries or scholarships. Signs of worry or a drop in performance could indicate that your student is struggling financially.

What should you do?

1. If the student or applicant is seeking general information about a finance issue Refer the student to the website.
york.ac.uk/students/finance/
2. If the student wants to speak to a student finance specialist for advice about their individual circumstances, direct the student to the Student Hub.
Web: york.ac.uk/student-hub
Tel: 01904 324140
Email: student-hub@york.ac.uk

Note: Giving advice about debt is an FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) regulated activity so should only be given by the Student Advisers in the Student Hub.

What happens next?

The University's student finance specialists can advise on a wide range of issues and liaise directly with external organisations. In some circumstances, students may qualify for an emergency loan or the hardship fund.

When a student has an enquiry about their visa

What should you look out for?

International students will often have queries about their visas especially when they are approaching the end of their course or need a renewal, extension or leave of absence.

Visa rules and immigration laws are complicated and advice is regulated by the Office of Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) so legally must only be given by specialists.

What should you do?

Direct the student to the International Student Support team in the Student Hub.

Web: york.ac.uk/immigration

Tel: 01904 324140

Email: immigration@york.ac.uk

What happens next?

A specialist will be able to support the student with all aspects of their query and offer them a one-to-one appointment if needed.

When a student reports discrimination, harassment or sexual violence

What should you look out for?

Discriminatory behaviour can have a serious negative impact on an individual. It is morally and legally wrong and can also impact negatively on the University's reputation. The University treats all cases seriously.

What should you do?

- 1. If the student wishes to talk to someone for support and guidance.**
Direct the student to a Student Adviser in the Student Hub.
Web: york.ac.uk/student-hub
Tel: 01904 324104
Email: student-hub@york.ac.uk
- 2. If the student wishes to report the misconduct of another student (including matters of sexual abuse or violence).**
Direct the student to the online reporting form york.ac.uk/student-misconduct
- 3. If the student wishes to report the misconduct of a member of staff.**
Direct the student to the Student Hub.
Web: york.ac.uk/student-hub
Tel: 01904 324104
Email: student-hub@york.ac.uk

What happens next?

The Student Adviser will offer support and signpost the student to any relevant complaints procedures. If a student chooses to make an online report, a relevant member of staff will contact them to explain their options before taking any action.

Other useful web pages

Reporting hate crime
york.ac.uk/students/help/hate-crime/

Sexual violence
york.ac.uk/students/health/sexual-violence/

When a student is considering changing course, a leave of absence or withdrawing

What should you look out for?

Look for changes in their behaviour and work. Do they seem different or has their attendance dropped? Are they behaving in a way that indicates there is something wrong?

What should you do?

It is important that someone have a conversation with the student to understand their particular issues and challenges, explore the options open to them (such as Exceptional Circumstances claims allowing extensions or sits as if for the first time on examinations; or Leave of Absence) and to explain the different types of support available to them.

1. We would always recommend that students speak to their academic supervisor initially.
2. To get more detailed advice, especially if the student is considering leaving, direct the student to the Student Advisers in the Student Hub
Web: york.ac.uk/student-hub
Tel: 01904 324104
Email: student-hub@york.ac.uk

You may also point the student to the web page with the information about changing their plan - york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/plan/

What happens next?

The Student Advisers will contact the student and offer them support and guidance to help them come to an informed decision.

If after that conversation the student wishes to withdraw, the Student Adviser will send them a Confirmation of Withdrawal form to complete.

Support Service Contacts

To discuss an issue or for more advice contact one of the following:

Paula Tunbridge, Director of Student Life and Wellbeing
Tel: 01904 32 3007, Email: paula.tunbridge@york.ac.uk

Nicola Campbell, Assistant Registrar, Conduct and Respect
Advice on discipline and conduct (sexual violence, harassment or hate crime)
Tel: 01904 32 3129, Email: nicola.campbell@york.ac.uk

Anne Haversham, Head of Open Door & Disability
Advice on mental health and disability
Tel: 01904 32 4399, Email: anne.haversham@york.ac.uk

Jill Ellis, Deputy Director of Student Services, Student Hub
For all other matters, general enquiries or if you're not sure
Tel: 01904 32 4704, Email jill.ellis@york.ac.uk

Look after yourself

Look after yourself. Take some time out and talk to a colleague or one of the Support Service contacts named above. HR also provide a range of support including:

- [Mental Health First Aid Contacts](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#)
- [Occupational Health](#)

Fitness to study

The University is committed to fostering a supportive community of learning where students are able to participate fully in their studies. However, there are times when it is in the best interest of a student (and of the community) to suspend or terminate the right to attend and/or study. You may want to complete the Fitness to Study/Attend Referral Form when:

- There are significant concerns about a student's ability to fulfil academic progress requirements without serious detriment to their own physical or mental health or the safety and well-being of other members of the University community
- Other support processes within the University have been offered and have been exhausted
- A student has been detained under a section of the Mental Health Act, taking into account considerations of capacity and the student's involvement in the fitness to study/attend procedure.

For more information about the policy and procedure, visit [Fitness to study/attend](#)

Additional sources of support

Colleges

Colleges play an important role in promoting and supporting student wellbeing. Assistant Heads of College offer quick and confidential appointments for all students. They can provide advice on a wide range of issues and are able to signpost students to additional support if needed.

Web: york.ac.uk/students/health/help/college-support

Independent advice and support

Some students may not be comfortable discussing their issues or problems with a member of University staff. If this is the case, there are a number of independent sources of support available on campus.

University of York Students' Union (YUSU) Advice and Support Centre

Web: yusu.org/advice-support

Email: asc@yusu.org

Tel 01904 32 3724

Drop in: YUSU building near James College

Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Welfare Advice

Web: yorkgsa.org/support/welfare/

Email: advice@yorkgsa.org

Tel 01904 32 2718

Drop in: First floor of Vanburgh, V/N/120

Nightline - Confidential listening by students for students, open 8pm to 8am (term-time).

Web: yorknightline.org.uk

Email: listening@york.nightline.ac.uk

Tel 01904 32 3735