

Student Mental Health Policy

Version number	Date approved (including committee)	Reason for production/revision	Author	Proposed next review date
V6.2	15/06/22 AcBO	Annual review	Head of Student Services	Biennially and as required
Related policies				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality & Diversity Policy and Procedure • Disability Policy and Procedure • Support to Study / Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure • Safeguarding Policy and Procedure 				
External Reference				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equality Act 2010, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents <i>The policy has been informed by the Equality Act 2010 consolidated, simplified, strengthened and replaced previous legislation, consolidating equality legislation with respect to nine protected characteristics, including disability.</i> 2. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: <i>Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access</i>. ICMP has developed practices and processes to ensure that there is a reliable fair and inclusive admissions system. 3. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: <i>Enabling Student Achievement</i>. ICMP aims to provide a supportive environment that will help students with mental health difficulties to realise their full academic potential. 				

1. Introduction

- 1.1. ICMP recognises that mental health issues, in the widest sense are relevant to all sectors of society of which the student body is part.
- 1.2. ICMP also recognises that there are critical issues relating to access and retention, which make it a concern for us that those students with disabilities (including mental health) can attend and succeed in their chosen course of study.
- 1.3. With specific reference to students, there are a number of regulatory and legal reasons for mental health issues to be an important consideration for institutions, including legislation under the Equality Act 2010.

2. Legal Context

- 2.1. The Equality Act 2010 consolidated, simplified, strengthened and replaced previous legislation, consolidating equality legislation with respect to nine protected characteristics, including disability.

3. Purpose

- 3.1. The purpose of ICMP's Student Mental Health policy is to ensure that ICMP provides a coherent approach when responding to students with mental health difficulties.
- 3.2. ICMP has specific legal responsibilities towards students whose mental condition falls within the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. This requires us to ensure that students with a recognised mental illness are not discriminated against and that reasonable adjustments are put in place to support their learning.
- 3.3. The expertise of ICMP lies in the provision of higher education and there will be certain services that cannot and should not be provided. No member of ICMP should go beyond their level of competence in trying to support or advise a student. Where ICMP do not provide a specific service, this should be made clear to students, and they should be encouraged to seek out other services available to them. In the context of mental health, this often means encouraging students to seek out their GP or local mental health services

4. Definitions

- 4.1. For the purpose of this document, 'mental health and wellbeing' is defined as one's emotional resilience, feeling safe and ability to cope and having a belief in one's own and other's worth. 'Mental health difficulties' in this document refers to
 - Long term mental illness and / or psychiatric conditions.
 - Emerging mental health problems that has the potential to develop into conditions that require ongoing support or interventions.
 - Temporary debilitating mental health conditions or reactions that impact the student's ability to fulfil their academic potential.

5. Scope

- 5.1. The policy relates to all students enrolled on a full-time or part-time course at ICMP.

6. Policy Aims

- 6.1. ICMP aims to provide a supportive environment that will help students with mental health difficulties to realise their full academic potential and to successfully complete their course. It also aims to facilitate and promote positive mental health and wellbeing by:
 - 6.1.1. Providing a range of student support services, including disability advice, mental health advice and a counselling service for students.
 - 6.1.2. Encouraging students with mental health difficulties to seek support.

- 6.1.3. Promoting understanding and recognition of mental health difficulties among the wider ICMP community.
- 6.1.4. Supporting a culture in which mental health problems are accepted, not stigmatised;
- 6.1.5. Liaising with appropriate local NHS services to ensure that students with serious mental health problems receive appropriate treatment
- 6.1.6. Escalating concerns and referring students who may be at risk by virtue of a diagnosis of a mental health condition to local NHS mental health services to ensure risk is appropriately mitigated.
- 6.1.7. Making reasonable adjustments to policies and procedures which might otherwise unlawfully discriminate against students with mental health difficulties;
- 6.1.8. Having in place effective procedures for the disclosure of information in respect of students with mental health difficulties.
- 6.1.9. Ensuring that the sources of support are clearly communicated to both prospective and current students.
- 6.1.10. Providing guidance and training to staff involved in the support and care of those with mental health difficulties.
- 6.1.11. Providing clear guidance on the confidentiality of personal information provided by students.

7. Definition of Reasonable Adjustments

- 7.1. A 'reasonable adjustment' is an alteration to a policy, procedure or practice that will remove/reduce a specific disadvantage or barrier that arises as a result of a student's disability and will enable the student to participate more fully in their course.
- 7.2. To protect academic standards, adjustments can only be put in place after suitable evidence has been received. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain appropriate evidence and submit this to the Disability & Wellbeing Team. There are time restrictions for some adjustments, such as examination recommendations, and where evidence is received outside of these time restrictions it may not be possible for adjustments to be put in place immediately
- 7.3. The requirement for reasonable adjustments will vary according to the needs of the individual. ICMP relies on the recommendations of professionals to identify the most appropriate adjustments for the person concerned. Recommendations will usually be based upon an individual student's medical or psychological diagnostic evidence. In addition, where a student has received an 'Assessment of Study Needs and Study Strategies Report' as part of their claim for Disabled Students' Allowances, additional recommendations made in this report may also be considered.
- 7.4. ICMP accepts that its duty to consider adjustments is continual and evolving and that an individual's requirements may change during their course of study due to an alteration in their condition. The ICMP considers each request for additional adjustments on an individual basis, though additional supporting evidence may be required in support of such requests.

8. Responsibility for Student Mental Health

- 8.1. The Head of Student Services has overall responsibility for issues relating to Student Mental Health. The key responsibility for the role is to raise awareness among the student body, academic team and wider administration staff of issues relating to learning support for students with mental health difficulties and ensure that students are only referred to support providers who have the appropriate skills and have received appropriate training and development.
- 8.2. The Student Wellbeing Team (Disability & Wellbeing)

- 8.2.1. Disability Advisers are responsible for ensuring that any student who requires reasonable adjustments has access to support and guidance appropriate to their learning needs.
- 8.2.2. Mental Health Advisers are responsible for ensuring students with mental health conditions are able to access appropriate support to their learning and emotional needs. This may also involve supporting students to access local primary care services and acting as point of contact for issues related to mental health across ICMP.
- 7.3 Starting to study in a new environment can be stressful. Most personal problems experienced in higher education can be resolved quickly by talking to a family member or a friend or by seeking help from tutors or other advisors. It is important not to label as "mental health" problems what are in reality normal emotional reactions to new experiences. However, a number of students may experience emotional or psychological difficulties that without appropriate professional support are more persistent and inhibit their ability to participate fully in higher education. These difficulties may take the form of a long-term mental illness or a temporary, but debilitating, psychological condition or reaction. In addition, some students may arrive at university with a pre-existing psychological problem, either declared or undeclared.
- 7.4 Mental health problems can seriously impair academic performance and may lead to confused or disturbed behaviour. Minor difficulties that interfere with a student's capacity to work may also result in distress and undermine academic progress. A more seriously disturbed student, as well as needing appropriate professional support, may cause anxiety and concern to fellow students, tutors and ICMP staff. The suicide or attempted suicide of a student is an extreme, but fortunately rare, response to mental distress and a very disturbing event for all, especially for those close to the individual concerned.

9. Support to Study / Return to Study and Fitness to Study Policy

- 9.1. The Health & Wellbeing Fitness to Study Policy outlines the steps that ICMP will follow when concerns are raised about the fitness to study of one of its students. It is intended to inform as a supportive procedure which can be used by staff when a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviour is having a detrimental impact on their ability to progress academically and function on their course at ICMP. In addition, the procedure should be used for any student whose ability to cope with student life, to study or progress on their course is compromised as the result of their health, wellbeing or disability. Any student who has / may have 8 weeks continued of absence due to serious health issues (including mental health) or injury will be requested to attend a Support to Study / Return to Study or Fitness to Study meeting depending on the level of risk and case history.
- 9.2. The student will be requested to provide evidence in advance of this meeting if it was a requirement of the Support to Study and Fitness to Study process, which confirms that they are well enough to return to the satisfaction of the panel members.
- 9.3. The precise nature of the evidence required from the student will be dependent on the individual circumstances, but in all cases, it is expected that this will involve a report from a recognised independent health professional with sufficient knowledge about the health and wellbeing of the student during the period of interruption and the potential impact that returning to study might have.
- 9.4. The report should include specific detail about the appropriateness of the student's health in the context of the proposed Return to Study; examples of relevant questions will depend on the academic discipline, but may include:
 - Consideration of risks associated with course of study/accommodation etc.
 - Consideration of the number of hours and timeframe required for the student to complete all assessments.

- Consideration of the demands of work based courses;
- Consideration of the demands of small group work on the student;
- How equipped the student is to deliver presentations, either to large or small groups;
- Evidence of a diagnosis of a medical condition that will assist in accessing support upon a return to study.

10. Helping Students in Crisis

- 10.1. If a student is considered to be at risk of self-harm the student should be encouraged and supported to contact their relevant GP or the 111 service out of hours to ensure the student has access to the medical expertise and knowledge of specialist help that is required in the management of a mental health crisis.
- 10.2. If risk of serious harm is imminent, for example with someone being violent towards others or expressing plans around ending their life, the emergency services should be contacted directly via 999.
- 10.3. Students with physical injuries resulting from self-harm should present at the Emergency Department, Royal Free Hospital or Emergency Department Psychiatric Service.
- 10.4. ICMP does not offer a crisis service for students. All students should be directed to contact relevant mental health crisis services or attend an accident emergency department in their respective post code

11. Disclosure and Confidentiality

- 11.1. In accordance with the Equality & Diversity Act 2010, ICMP has a duty to anticipate needs wherever possible, to make reasonable adjustments accordingly and to treat all students equally. In accordance with GDPR and ICMP's policy on Data Protection information on a learner cannot be passed to a third party without the explicit informed consent from the student.
- 11.2. ICMP will only contact a student's parents or next of kin with the student's consent. However, in some circumstances there may be a requirement to contact a student's next of kin if there are concerns around the student's safety and ability to manage their own welfare and/ or keep themselves safe.
- 11.3. Staff will contact next of kin without the student's permission if medical or other emergency personnel advise it is required or if the student is considered to be at significant risk. This decision is taken on a case by case basis and would be discussed with the Registrar, Head of Student Services and Mental Health Advisor.

12. The Mental Capacity Act 2005

- 12.1. The Mental Capacity Act is founded on the principle that every adult has the right to make their own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to make those decisions unless it is determined that they lack the capacity to make a particular decision. An adult will only be deemed to lack capacity to make a particular decision if, because of an impairment of, or a disturbance in the functioning of, the mind or brain they are unable to:
 - 12.1.1. Understand the information relevant to the decision;
 - 12.1.2. Retain that information;
 - 12.1.3. Use or weigh that information as part of the decision-making process; or
 - 12.1.4. Communicate the decision.
- 12.2. If ICMP staff are concerned that a student's mental capacity is impaired they should involve a medical professional to undertake a capacity assessment.
- 12.3. It is extremely unlikely that students will be considered to lack the capacity to make decisions about their studies unless they are temporarily incapacitated (i.e. unconscious or acutely unwell). However, mental capacity and fitness to study are distinct and involve separate considerations. They should not be conflated.

12.4. The Mental Health Act 1983 allows individuals to be admitted to hospital, detained and treated without their consent, either for their own health and safety, or for the protection of other people. People can be admitted, detained and treated under different sections of the Mental Health Act, depending on the circumstances. If there are concerns that an individual is acutely unwell as a result of a mental health condition, ICMP staff should call the emergency services as set out in this policy.

13. Students detained under the Mental Health Act

13.1. Prospective Students who are or who have been detained under the Mental Health Act at the point of application and/or less than six months prior to the start of the course will need to attend a stage 1 Support to Study meeting to establish whether the student has capacity to undertake higher education. ICMP would only proceed with accepting a student onto a course if medical evidence from an appropriately trained clinician is provided by the applicant. The evidence needs to confirm the following:

13.1.1. the student is no longer legally detained under the mental health act 1983 or they are having extended periods of section 17 leave with view to being taken off a section in the foreseeable future;

13.1.2. Confirmation of the students' diagnosis and fitness to study. In addition, the student should provide copies of their care plan and risk assessment to ascertain the level of primary care input and follow up from a clinical service.

13.2. In the event that a student is sectioned under the mental health act and/or hospitalised due to a mental health crisis the following will be initiated:

13.2.1. At the point at which the student notifies us that they have been sectioned or hospitalised they will be temporarily suspended from studies. The student will be advised to seek appropriate treatment of their problem in order that they may return fit to study. ICMP would only proceed with accepting a student back onto a course if medical evidence from an appropriately trained clinician is provided. The evidence needs to confirm the following as appropriate:

- the student is no longer legally detained under the mental health act 1983 or they are having extended periods of section 17 leave with view to being taken off a section in the foreseeable future
- Confirmation of the students' diagnosis and fitness to study. In addition, the student should provide copies of their care plan and risk assessment to ascertain the level of primary care input and follow up from a clinical service.

13.3. In the instance that a student has previously been sectioned under the mental health act and/or hospitalised due to a mental health crisis and one of the following applies:

- It has not been possible to put in place further adjustments;
- The student did not take advantage of the adjustments put in place;
- If the student's health, wellbeing or behaviour worsens or has an adverse effect on the health or wellbeing of ICMP community.

13.3.1. The student will be requested to attend a Stage 3 Fitness to Study meeting.

14. Measures for monitoring support for students with disabilities.

14.1. The Admissions Panel is responsible for matters relating to equality of opportunity in student recruitment and admissions, for developing policies which meet legislative requirements and best practice, for monitoring the impact of these policies on different minority groups, and for reviewing relevant student recruitment and admissions data.

14.2. The Head of Student Services & Dean of Academic Studies are responsible for matters relating to equality of opportunity in learning, teaching and assessment, for

developing policies which meet legislative requirements and best practice, for monitoring the impact of these policies on different minority groups, and for reviewing relevant data on the retention, achievement and success of disabled students.

- 14.3. Students are given the opportunity to review their individual Support Agreement annually. Feedback from these meetings as well as NSS data and feedback from Student Senate contributes to the development of support at ICMP.

15. Continuing Professional Development

- 15.1. ICMP is committed to ensuring that all teaching and support staff are appropriately trained and that teaching practice/strategies are inclusive. ICMP will provide information for staff in a range of media, including printed information leaflets (Mental Health, Autism, etc.) and will ensure that training is available on a regular basis (mental health, dyslexia etc.)
- 15.2. Information and training is reviewed and provided at the beginning of the academic year dependent on the needs of the students.
- 15.3. ICMP is committed to ensuring its disability and wellbeing services are working in line with current best practice in student disability and mental health provision. Staff within the Student Wellbeing Team are required to maintain awareness and keep up to date with any recent developments within the sector and implement this where appropriate.