

Framework for Supporting Studentship

This policy is effective from 1 Nov 2018

Approval body Academic Council **Approval date** 31 October 2018

Owner Head of Academic Affairs **Next review date** October 2023

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To describe the academic and pastoral support available to students in NCAD

2. Scope

- 2.1 This framework applies to all students and to all staff in roles where they engage with students.

3. Overview

- 3.1 NCAD is committed to meeting the needs of our students and providing student supports that ensure fair and appropriate access to support in academic and non-academic matters. NCAD's student support framework describes the student support structures available on a College-wide basis, and seeks to ensure consistent quality of provision for all students.
- 3.2 The framework of academic and pastoral support for students provided by NCAD is largely provided through the College's student support services, with the support of staff in Schools and Departments, and include academic, pastoral and administrative services. The cohesion between these services and the wider academic College community is fundamental to a high-quality student experience.
- 3.3 This document does not address the full range of services provided for students within the College; its primary focus is the provision of pastoral support. Other types of support services and developmental opportunities provided to students include Library and IT Services. The details of these are outlined in the NCAD Student Handbook and on the College website.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Staff

- 4.1.1 Often the first person a student discloses a difficulty to, or to notice that a student is experiencing difficulty – whether that difficulty is social, financial or health related – will be a member of staff. Therefore, staff should familiarise themselves with this policy. Workshops on supporting students experiencing difficulties are available on an annual basis and staff are encouraged to avail of this resource.

Doc version	Approval date	Modified by	Summary of modifications
V1	31 October 2018	N/A	N/A

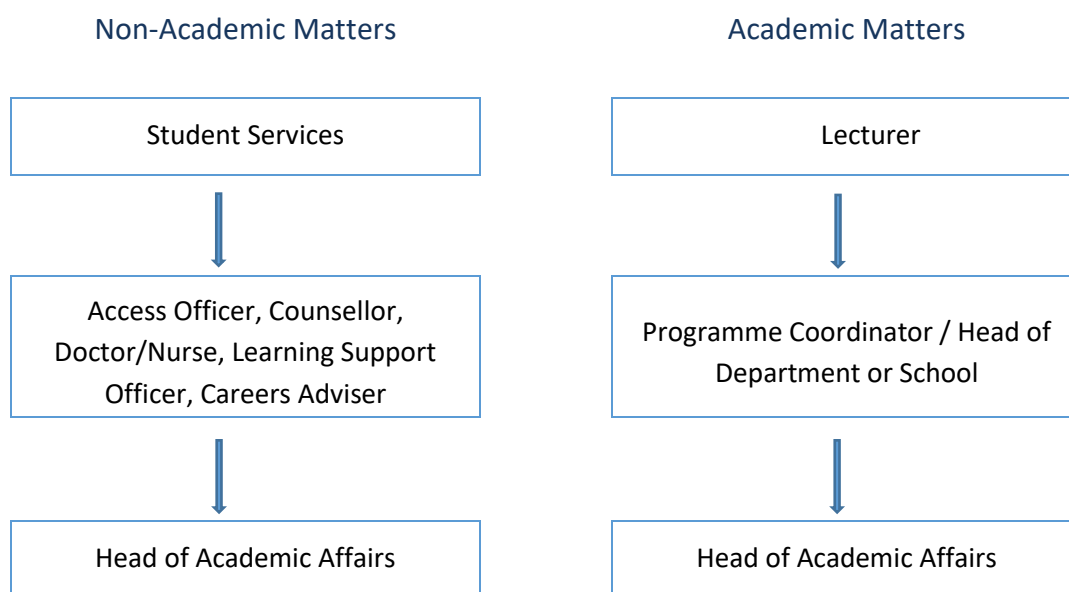
4.2 Students

- 4.2.1 Students are encouraged to take care of their own mental health. For example, students should ensure that they get adequate rest and exercise, take medication if prescribed, and access appropriate support whether inside or outside NCAD.
- 4.2.2 Students are responsible for communicating their needs and seeking support within NCAD. The College cannot offer appropriate and reasonable supports without this information.
- 4.2.3 Students with diagnosed mental health conditions are encouraged to seek support from NCAD's Learning Support Service. The Learning Support Service invites students to participate in a needs assessment where they will agree on a support plan and reasonable accommodations can be put in place to reduce the impact of the mental health condition on the student's academic studies.
- 4.2.4 The NCAD Community Charter and the NCAD Student Code apply to every student. Students should be aware that any behaviour which impacts negatively on fellow students or staff, or which is in any way disruptive or which breaches NCAD's policies and procedures for the maintenance of good academic and behavioural discipline, is not acceptable and will be subject to NCAD's Student Code and the NCAD Dignity and Respect Policy.
- 4.2.5 Students concerned about a fellow student's wellbeing should refer their fellow student to the available resources and encourage them to seek support at the earliest opportunity. Students may wish to direct their fellow student to NCAD's Counselling Service, Medical Support Services on campus, or the NCAD Students' Union. Students should be aware of their personal limitations. If someone is in immediate danger or is a danger to others, students should call emergency services (telephone 999 or 112), and if on campus should contact the Attendants.

4.3 Confidentiality

- 4.3.1 Students can expect that NCAD will treat information relating to a student's well-being confidentially. Information is only shared with a student's consent and the student will be told who the information is being shared with and the reasons for sharing this information. There are limited exceptions to this rule, for example where a student is considered a danger to themselves or others, where a crime is being investigated, where disclosure is required by law, or where procedures of the Mental Health Acts 2001-2009 are invoked, for example for the purpose of an involuntary admission to an approved centre such as a hospital.

5. Avenues of Consultation for Students Seeking Support



5.1 Non-Academic Matters

5.1.1 Student Services

5.1.1.1 Student Services' primary role and responsibility is to ensure that all students are provided with administrative support.

When to see Student Services

5.1.1.2 The first point of contact for students requiring administrative assistance will be Student Services.

5.1.1.3 Students may access a Student Service Officer directly or through Reception. Details of the current Student Service Officers and how to contact them are available in the Student Handbook and on the College website.

5.1.1.4 If the administrative staff member believes that another person should be present due to the circumstances of the meeting, the Student Services & Admissions Officer and the student will be informed before the meeting.

5.1.2 Student Services & Admissions Officer, Access Officer, Counsellor, Learning Support Officer

5.1.2.1 The primary role and responsibility of the Student Services & Admissions Officer, the Access Officer, the Counsellor, and the Learning Support Officer is to ensure that all students are provided with support in any non-academic matters and ensure that they are equipped with life skills and other aspects necessary for success in their academic study.

5.1.2.2 The first point of contact for students concerning personal matters would normally be the Student Services & Admissions Officer, the Access Officer, the Counsellor or the Learning Support Officer. If a staff member is aware that a student may need personal support, they

should first report it to their Head of Department, who may refer the student to the appropriate Student Support Service.

5.1.3 Head of Academic Affairs

5.1.3.1 In non-academic matters, the primary role and responsibility of the Head of Academic Affairs is to ensure that all students are treated equitably and fairly in all aspects of their education at all times.

5.1.3.2 The Head of Academic Affairs will provide support for students and staff in matters of urgency, gravity and other exceptional circumstances. The student may be referred to other officers, e.g. the Student Services & Admissions Officer, the Counsellor, Access Officer or Learning Support Officer, as the Head of Academic Affairs judges appropriate.

5.1.3.3 The Head of Academic Affairs will be accessible by appointments through Student Services at a time amenable to both parties.

5.1.3.4 During the meeting with the Head of Academic Affairs, notes will be taken and recorded on the students file in the Institute's electronic database. If the Head of Academic Affairs believes that another person should be present due to the circumstances of the meeting, the student will be informed before the meeting. In cases where a sensitive or highly confidential issue is discussed, a record of the interview will be documented and stored in a secure drive only accessible by key personnel. The outcome of the interview will be communicated expediently to the student in writing (student e-mail or letter).

5.2 Academic Matters

5.2.1 Lecturer

5.2.1.1 The lecturer's primary role and responsibility is to lecture and tutor the students and to support the students' academic progress. They are the first point of contact for student concerns. However, the student may be referred to other officers, e.g. Student Services and/or the Learning Support Officer, as the lecturer deems appropriate.

When to see Lecturers

5.2.1.2 The lecturer is the first point of contact for students concerning operational and academic matters. The student can then consult their programme coordinator or Head of Department if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their meeting with the lecturer.

5.2.1.3 During the meeting with the lecturer, notes will be taken and recorded on the student's file in the Department or School Office. If the lecturer believes that another person should be present due to the circumstances of the meeting, the student will be informed before the meeting. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated expediently to the student in writing (student e-mail or letter).

5.2.2 Programme Coordinator / Head of Department or School

5.2.2.1 The Head of Department's primary role and responsibility is to support their Head of School and the Head of Academic Affairs in ensuring that all students are provided with a safe, supportive and challenging teaching and learning environment at the higher educational level.

When to see the Head of Department

5.2.2.2 The first point of contact for students concerning operational matters will be their lecturer. The student can then consult their Head of Department if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their meeting with the lecturer. The student may be referred to other officers, e.g. the Learning Support Officer, as the Head of Department deems appropriate.

5.2.2.3 Heads of Department will be available for consultation by appointment through the Department or School Office.

5.2.2.4 During the meeting with the Head of Department notes will be taken and recorded on the student's file in the Department or School Office. If the Head of Department believes that another person should be present due to the circumstances of the meeting, the student will be informed before the meeting. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated expediently to the student in writing (student e-mail or letter).

5.2.3 Head of Academic Affairs

5.2.3.1 In academic matters, the primary role and responsibility of the Head of Academic Affairs is to ensure that all students are provided with a safe, supportive and challenging teaching and learning environment at the higher educational level.

When to see the Head of Academic Affairs

5.2.3.2 The first point of contact for students concerning operational matters will be their lecturer. The student can then consult their Head of Department / School if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their meeting with the lecturer. The Head of Academic Affairs ensures that due process is followed, and if necessary, provides an avenue for further consultation and advice. The Head of Academic Affairs will be accessible by appointments through Student Services at a time amenable to both parties.

5.2.3.3 During the meeting with the Head of Academic Affairs, notes will be taken and recorded on the student's file in the College's electronic database. If the Head of Academic Affairs believes that another person should be present due to the circumstances of the meeting, the student will be informed before the meeting. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated expediently to the student in writing (student e-mail or letter).

5.3 Benefits of Disclosure

5.3.1 Students are strongly encouraged to disclose if they are experiencing difficulties. Without such disclosure, NCAD cannot provide appropriate supports or make appropriate referrals.

6. Guidance for Staff

6.1 Responding to Students in Distress

6.1.1 Mental health difficulties affect each individual differently and a wide range of signs and symptoms can indicate that a student has mental health difficulties. It is important that staff are aware of the possible indicators that might indicate a student is in distress. Indicators that a student may have a mental health difficulty can include:

- Behaviour: the student might be behaving in an unusual or unpredictable manner that is causing concern, which might include changes in patterns of attendance or their academic performance might alter dramatically.
- Statements: the content of the student's conversations might seem erratic or out of character, or the student might express suicidal thoughts or ideas.
- Appearance: the student might seem tense, irritable, sad, or withdrawn, or the student's appearance might have changed, for instance they might become unkempt.
- Additional Information: the student might have declared a mental health problem or other people might be expressing concerns for the student.

6.1.2 In some cultures there is a high level of stigmatisation associated with mental health difficulties and students may be reluctant to admit mental distress or to seek help. In some instances, this can lead students to present mental health issues in the form of physical complaints such as headaches, digestive disorders, etc.

6.1.3 Do not avoid the situation.

- If you have a good relationship with the student, you might be able to approach them and raise your concerns directly with them. This should be done sensitively and you should direct the student to the appropriate support services (please see section 8).
- It might be appropriate to discuss your concerns with a colleague. They might have noticed some changes in the student, or perhaps your colleague is in a stronger position to approach the student. When discussing your concerns with a colleague, you should ensure that confidentiality is maintained as appropriate.
- If you think you could benefit from additional advice you could discuss your concerns with the NCAD Counselling Service or the Head of Academic Affairs.

6.2 Confidentiality

6.2.1 Any disclosure of a mental health difficulty by a student to university staff must be treated sensitively, respectfully, and confidentially. This is important on a statutory basis, for protecting data, and for creating a safe space in which students feel safe to talk about mental health difficulties. Some students will be concerned about the sharing of their information. Therefore, the sharing of information should be discussed in each individual case with the student beforehand. The student should be informed about who the information will be shared with and why, and that this will be done appropriately, in confidence, in their best interests, and that it will not affect their academic standing.

6.2.2 If a student does not consent to their information being shared, it should not be shared unless required by law and/or as provided for below. Students should be made aware that if permission is not given to share their information with relevant staff, it might not be possible to make recommended reasonable accommodations or to put recommended supports in place.

6.2.3 Information should only be given to external third parties, such as parents, with the student's express consent, preferably in writing. While it is permissible to listen to and receive information from external third parties, it should be made clear to the third party that the student in question has a right to know the content and source of such information. If external third parties (e.g. a parent or a spouse) are concerned about a student, staff should direct the third party to contact the student directly to encourage the student to

contact relevant services. If the third party is concerned about the safety of the student, staff should direct the third party to contact emergency services to report their concerns.

6.2.4 Information can be disclosed without a student's consent in the following, limited circumstances:

- Where the student is considered a danger to themselves or others
- Where a crime is being investigated and information is requested
- Where information is requested for the purpose of safeguarding the security of the State by a member of An Garda Síochána of the rank of chief superintendent or higher or by an officer of the Permanent Defence Force designated by the Minister for Defence and who holds the rank of colonel or higher
- Where disclosure is required by law, for example by a court or legislation, such as the Children First Bill 2014, once enacted.
- Where procedures of the Mental Health Acts 2001-2009 are invoked, for example for the purpose of an involuntary admission to an approved centre such as a hospital.

6.2.5 In these rare instances, strictly limited information, proportionate to the situation that has arisen, may be disclosed to university personnel or third parties including health care professionals and An Garda Síochána. Where information is sought by a third party for investigatory purposes, as distinct from a situation where disclosure of personal data is urgently required to prevent injury, it should be confirmed that the third party has a valid legal basis for requesting the information such as a search warrant or a letter from a garda superintendent. Some professionals, such as medical practitioners, will have their own professional codes relating to confidentiality which apply when they are acting in a clinical capacity. If a member of staff is unsure how to act in a given situation, they should consult their line manager or the Head of Academic Affairs.

6.4 Role of Staff

- 6.4.1 Staff should be ready to offer support to students but are not expected to assume responsibilities outside the parameters of their role and should be aware of their personal limitations.
- 6.4.2 Staff should refer students to the resources which are available and encourage them to seek support at the earliest opportunity (see section 8 for a directory of services).
- 6.4.3 Staff can direct students to the NCAD Student Counselling Service or the NCAD Medical Service.
- 6.4.4 In exceptional circumstances, where someone is in immediate danger or is a danger to others, staff should call emergency services (telephone 999 or 112), and if on campus the NCAD Attendants (01 636 4290).
- 6.4.5 If a student discloses a mental health condition staff should make the student aware of the services provided by the NCAD Counselling Service and the NCAD Access Office for students with a disability. In order to register with the Access Office to avail of disability or learning support a student must provide verification of her/his disability with supporting documentation, preferably at the beginning of Semester 1. NCAD requires

evidence/verification of a disability to support the provision of reasonable accommodations in College. Students who do not have appropriate evidence of their disability should forward the Evidence of Disability form provided on the Student Support Services section of the College Website (<https://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/disability-support-at-ncad/>) to their Medical Consultant/Specialist to be completed and stamped. General Practitioner (GP) letters will not be accepted as suitable medical evidence. Students are encouraged to contact the Access Officer, mcternanf@staff.ncad.ie as soon as possible for information on registering with the service.

- 6.4.6 If staff are aware that a student has a diagnosed mental health condition which might affect their academic performance they should suggest to the student that they consider registering with the NCAD Student Support Service (<https://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/student-learning-support-service/>).
- 6.4.7 If a student is not registered with the NCAD Student Support Service, but requires temporary supports in relation to module or end of semester assessment due to a mental health difficulty, staff should direct the student to their Head of Department, who in turn should consult with their Head of School and the Head of Academic Affairs.
- 6.4.8 Staff should respond to any disclosure of mental health difficulties by a student in a non-judgemental and supportive manner. Staff should be sensitive in their choice of language. Negative or dismissive language discourages students from disclosing mental health difficulties and can further stigmatise such difficulties.
- 6.4.9 Any member of staff who has concerns should discuss these with a colleague, a student adviser, the NCAD Student Counselling Service, or the Head of Academic Affairs. It is important that the confidentiality of the student be observed during these preliminary discussions and, as such, general advice about a student's wellbeing and the appropriate response by a member of staff should be sought without mentioning the student's name.

You are concerned that a student is showing signs of distress

Do not avoid the situation

Do you think they are in danger to themselves or others?

If you are not sure, see Consider asking advice box below.

Yes

→ See Process Flow Chart 2: Directions for Staff (urgent cases)

No

→

1. Be aware that the student may want to discuss sensitive issues with you and you should arrange to discuss matters with them in a setting where they can be assured of their confidentiality.
2. Inform the student about your concerns and reasons for them and listen to the student. The process of listening itself might be helpful for the student.
3. Be clear about what you can and cannot do. You should not be expected to solve the problem. Try and ascertain the extent of the student's problem and onto which one of the services it might be appropriate to refer the student.

Are you still concerned about the student?

If you are not sure, see Consider Seeking Advice box below.

Yes

→ If anything has given you reason to be concerned about the safety of the student or anyone else, you should treat this as urgent. See Process Flowchart 2: Directions for Staff (urgent cases).

→ If you do not think there is an immediate danger, but you think the student would benefit from additional assistance, consider the options overleaf.

No

Thank the student for meeting with you, and invite them to raise any future concerns with you or other College services. Consider arranging a follow up appointment to keep lines of communication open.

Consider seeking advice from:

Colleagues

Line Manager

NCAD Counselling Service

Head of Academic Affairs

If the student has disclosed information to you, you should protect their confidentiality by talking in general terms without naming them.

If you do not think there is an immediate danger, but you think the student would benefit from additional assistance, consider the following options.

Consider seeking advice from:

Colleagues | Line Manager | NCAD Counselling Service | Head of Academic Affairs

If a student has disclosed information to you, you should protect their confidentiality by talking in general terms.

You can refer the student to:

Web resources

www.pleasetalk.ie provides information on available resources.

NCAD Counselling Service

The student can make an appointment themselves, or with the student's permission, you can make an appointment on their behalf.

The HSE provides advice through www.yourmentalhealth.ie and #littletthingsmatter campaign. Search for LittleThingsHub on Facebook and Twitter.

If the student is reluctant to accept a referral, you could try one of the following:

Suggest that a second opinion would be helpful for them and you.

Explain to the student that their difficulties are outside your area of expertise.

Dispel myth about seeking help from a professional

Encourage the student to schedule 'just one' appointment, and suggest that seeking professional support is a sign of strength and maturity.

Request that they consider other options

Some students might not wish to see a counsellor but will agree to visit a GP. Others might prefer to talk to a chaplain or a local support group. You can outline a range of options.

Explore the student's reluctance

A reluctance to seek help might relate to previous negative experiences or a misconception that information about help-seeking will be passed on to lecturers or family. If you explore the reluctance, it might be possible to resolve the concern.

If the student remains reluctant to accept a referral, unless you have fears in relation to safety, this should be respected and no further action is appropriate at this point.

A student with mental health difficulties is more likely to benefit from professional help without coercion. The student might seek professional help later.

Arrange a follow up appointment to keep lines of communication open and revisit the situation.

You have reason to think a student might be in danger to themselves or to others

NO

If there is no immediate threat but the student still requires medical intervention.

The student might be:

- Expressing suicidal thoughts or wishing they were dead.
- Threatening to self-harm.
- Expressing bizarre thoughts or ideas.
- Unduly agitated or behaving in a bizarre manner.

If possible, consult your line manager or a colleague. Explain your concern to the student and ask would it be possible to contact someone on their behalf (unless you think these actions will exacerbate the situation).

During office hours

Seek consent of student to contact one of the following to make an appointment:

- NCAD Counselling Service 01 636 4200 or text 087 951 9819
- NCAD Medical Service 01 636 4200
- The student's GP (you will need details from the student)

If the student withholds consent to contact medical services, consider contactin the services anyway. Advising the student to contact their family is strongly advised, and, in urgent cases, contacting the family directly may need to be considered. The student's wellbeing or safety and the wellbeing and safety of others take precedence over issues of confidentiality. Therefore information may be passed on in these circumstances without the student's consent.

YES

If you think this is a life-threatening emergency, you should contact emergency services.

Overdose or threat of self-harm:

- Request Ambulance 999 or 112
- Inform Attendants: 4290
- Inform Head of Academic Affairs: 4210

Student violent, armed, aggressive, or threatening:

- Contact Garda 999 or 112
- Inform Attendants: 4290

If you find after the incident you are affected, you should talk to your line manager or consider seeking support through NCAD HR.

Outside office hours

Seek consent from student to contact one of the following to make an appointment:

Dub Doc 01 45 45 607 (out of hours GP service)
Mon-Fri 6-10pm
Sat-Sun 10am-6pm
Bank holidays 10am-6pm

If you find after the incident you are affected, you should talk to your line manage or consider seeking support through NCAD HR.