
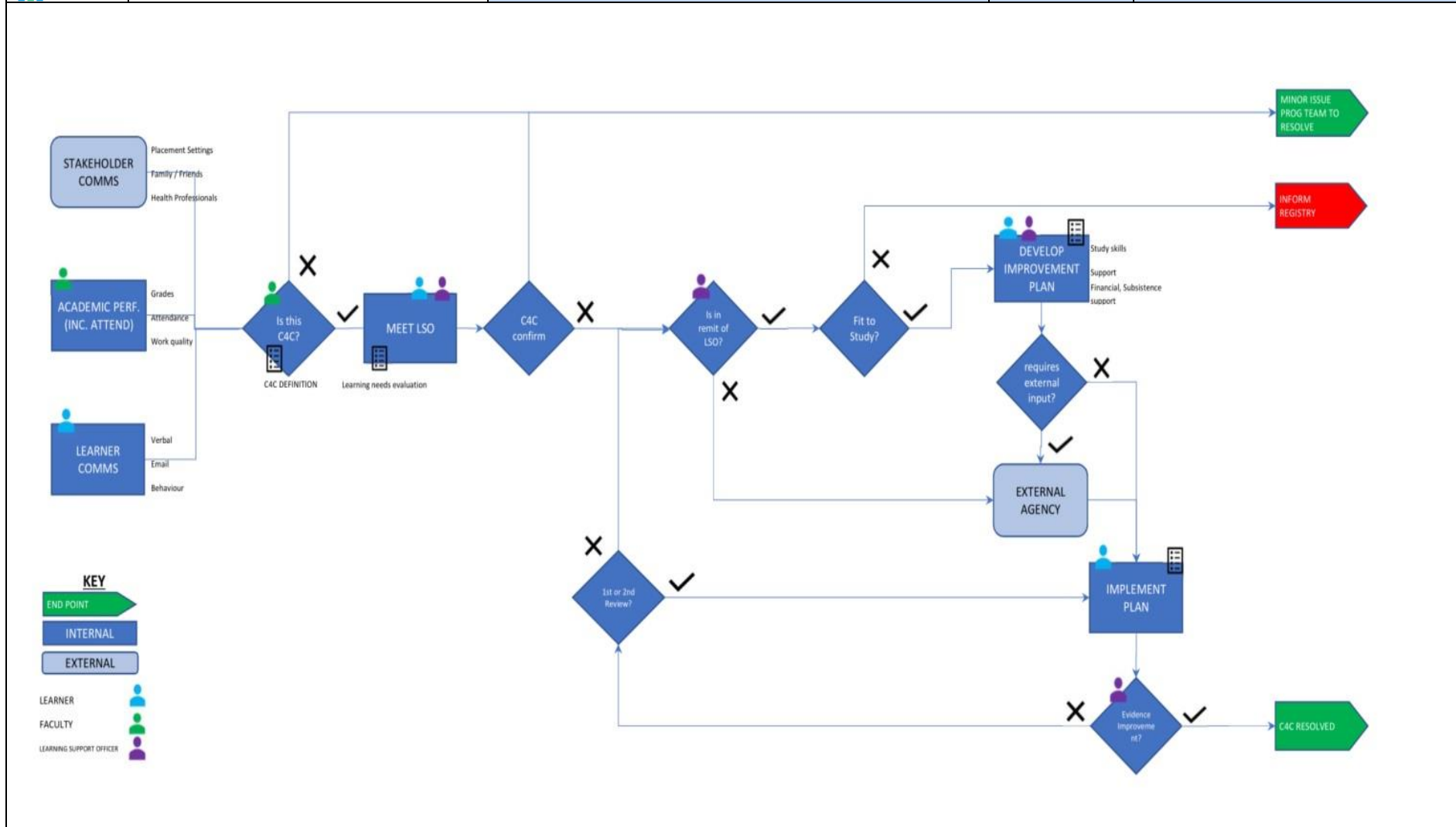


#	POLICY TITLE	POLICY AREA:	VERSION:	DATE ADOPTED :
	<b>7.5 CAUSE FOR CONCERN</b>	7) SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS	3.0	AUGUST 2020



**Introduction and Context:**

The purpose of this document is to outline SNMCI Cause for Concern process. It, also, states the means by which a Cause for Concern is identified and how the College will communicate about and respond to issues that are a Cause for Concern.

In certain instances, other SNMCI procedures may be happening in parallel with the Cause for Concern process or may be initiated as a result of the Cause for Concern process, for example, issues of concern that are related to fitness to study. *If during the Cause for Concern procedures a learner is identified as experiencing circumstances that impact on their fitness to study the 'Policy to Support and Determine Student's Fitness to Continue in Study' is invoked.*

This policy does not replace the College process related to more serious breaches of academic integrity. Issues of concern that relate to academic integrity are dealt with in line with SNMCI's 'Academic Integrity Policy'. (QA 7.8)

Issues of concern that relate to child protection are dealt with in line with the 'SNMCI Child Safeguarding Statement'.

**Definition:** Cause for Concern is when there are concerns about a learner's wellbeing that may impact on academic performance. These concerns may be academic, physical, emotional, spiritual, medical or behavioural.

**Cause for Concern may include any of the following:**

- medical: illness: temporary or ongoing
- general health or welfare issues
- mental health concerns such as anxiety or depression
- dyslexia, dyscalculia or similar
- bereavement following death of close family member or friend
- financial concerns
- poor academic performance / or work quality
- poor attendance and /or punctuality
- failure to respond positively to informal advice and offers of support and first level warnings
- failure to complete or hand in work on time
- erratic or sudden change in behaviour
- lack of compliance with College regulations (filling in forms / bringing in medical certificates)

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive; situations of a similar nature will be dealt with in accordance with these guidelines.

**Policy:**

Many learners who present to College have prior or ongoing Cause for Concern. On enrolling in the College, learners are encouraged to disclose issues that are likely to affect their learning / academic performance and /or that have affected their learning / academic performance in the past. It is our experience that issues may resurface when a learner is coping with the normal stressors associated with College life and learning.

- On entering the College, each learner must attend a meeting with the Learner Support Officer (LSO). During this meeting they complete a Learner Wellbeing form.
- On entering the College, each learner must provide written consent for Learner Wellbeing information to be stored on the College server and to be shared with the relevant staff.

During their time in College, many learners experience circumstances that may result in Cause for Concern. They are encouraged to disclose issues that are likely to affect their learning / academic performance and to engage with staff to develop and agree an action plan.

It is important that both the learner and relevant staff are aware of any issue of concern at the earliest possible stage and that a supportive action plan can be agreed. It is better to report an issue of concern early. Waiting and hoping for an improvement may delay effective intervention.

**Communication by Learners**

- If an issue is common to many learners, learners are encouraged to communicate with the appropriate staff member through their Student Representative.
- Learners are advised to inform themselves of the names and of the roles of the various staff members from their earliest days in the College. They are encouraged to contact the **APPROPRIATE** College staff member with their query.
- Communications by learners with College staff may happen at the beginning or at the end of lectures, by email or in person by appointment.
- When a learner presents to a College staff member with an issue, the staff member will assess the nature of the issue with a view to resolving the issue.
- Depending on the nature of the issue the staff member may:
  - be in a position to answer the query immediately





<p style="text-align: center;">- application for deferral of placement</p> <p>This list is not exhaustive or exclusive          (Note: a request for: an extension for an assignment, a deferral of modules or a deferral of placement may happen outside of the Cause for Concern process.)  <i>or /and</i></p> <p>b) <b>an intervention plan</b> that includes external counselling support.          When external counselling is recommended / required, the College pays for four sessions with a counselling psychologist who is accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI).          If necessary, additional sessions, paid for by the learner, may be organised with the counselling psychologist. A date for review is decided</p> <p><b>Stage 3:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The learner implements the plan. The learner will engage with other staff members as necessary.</li> <li>- Review meetings are held. If during the first or second review there is no improvement the plan will be revisited. If, upon the third review there is still no improvement fitness to study is determined.</li> <li>- The LSO in consultation with the learner and other relevant staff members is satisfied that the Cause for Concern is resolved.</li> <li>- The learner is discharged by the LSO.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learner/ LSO/ Staff as appropriate</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LSO</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Intervention Plan</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Updated plans/ Correspondence</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Final Report</b></p>
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### Policy Control Sheet

<b>Policy</b>	<b>QA 7.5: Cause for Concern</b>
<b>Version</b>	3.0
<b>Adopted/Effective</b>	Aug 2020
<b>Supersedes</b>	2.0
<b>Monitoring/ Next Review Date</b>	Yearly/Aug 2021
<b>Responsible Officer(s) Designated Reviewer(s)</b>	Learner Support Officer; DQAA; CEO
<b>Scope</b>	College wide

### References

<b>SNMCI Policy area</b>	<b>7) Support for Learners Vol 2</b>
<b>Developed with reference to</b>	<p>QQI (2016) <i>Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines</i></p> <p>QQI (2016) <i>Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis</i></p> <p><i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), May 2015</i></p> <p>National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)</p>
<b>Related SNMCI Policies / Forms</b>	QA 7.6: Fitness to Study

### Revision

<b>Revision Number</b>	<b>Revision Description</b>	<b>Originator</b>	<b>Approved By</b>
2.0/08/2020	General Review for Blended Learning	Office of DQAA	AB