

# LAINE

THEATRE ARTS

## **Policies**

# FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY

The following policy applies to BA (Hons) Musical Theatre (3-year course), Level 6 Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre, BA (Hons) Musical Theatre (one-year top-up), Cert HE (Musical Theatre) and the 1-year Foundation Course in Musical Theatre.

## PURPOSE

This policy sets out the College's approach to supporting students whose health, wellbeing or personal circumstances may impact their ability to engage with their programme of study. It should be read alongside the Student Support and Intervention Framework and is typically applied within Pathway D.

Where concerns indicate a potential risk of harm to the student or others, the College will take immediate safeguarding action, which may include temporary precautionary measures, referral to safeguarding procedures, or external support services.

This policy aligns with Office for Students (OfS) expectations relating to student outcomes, continuation, wellbeing and fair process. It aims to ensure an appropriate balance between the provision of high-quality student support and the maintenance of the professional and behavioural standards expected of students in training. It also aligns with the College's Intermissions Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy, Student Charter, and Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures. The application of this policy will ensure that academic standards are maintained, and that any adjustments or decisions do not compromise the integrity of the programme.

## SCOPE

This policy will be applied where there is a reasonable concern that a student's health, wellbeing, or personal circumstances are having a material impact on their ability to engage safely, effectively, and sustainably in their programme of study, or may pose a risk to themselves or others.

Where concerns relate to both wellbeing and conduct, the College will determine whether parallel processes are required and will ensure that support-led and disciplinary processes remain clearly distinguished.

It should not be used to justify absence from teaching, or difficulties in completing assessment. In such cases, students should refer to the LTA Extenuating Circumstances Policy. Where concerns relate primarily to student conduct, the Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures will apply.

## PRINCIPLES

The College will apply this policy in line with the following principles:

- Early intervention: Students will be supported at the earliest opportunity through the Student Support and Intervention Framework.
- Student-centred approach: Students will be actively involved in discussions and decisions wherever possible.
- Proportionality: Actions taken will reflect the level of concern and risk.
- Support before sanction: Every effort will be made to enable continuation through reasonable adjustments and support.
- The College will consider reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that disabled students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Decisions will take account of individual circumstances and protected characteristics as appropriate.

- Transparency: Students will be clearly informed of concerns, processes, and possible outcomes.
- Safety: The College retains a duty of care to the student and wider community.

## STAGES OF ACTION

All concerns are reviewed initially by the Student Support Lead through the Student Support & Intervention Framework triage process. This ensures a consistent, proportionate and supportive response to any issues affecting a student's wellbeing, engagement, or ability to train effectively.

While timeframes may vary depending on complexity, the College will ensure that cases are progressed without undue delay, and students will be kept informed of progress at each stage.

### Stage 1 - Initial Support and Guidance

This stage applies where a concern is identified early and can be addressed through short-term support and guidance.

This aligns with **early triage and short-term support (Pathway A)** within the Student Support & Intervention Framework.

Students experiencing short-term health, wellbeing, or personal difficulties affecting their training are encouraged to book an appointment with the Student Support Lead via the VLE.

Where staff have concerns about a student, they should contact the Student Support Lead directly with a summary of their observations.

The focus at this stage is early conversation, understanding need, and putting in place appropriate initial support to enable continued engagement in training.

## STAGE 2 - EMERGING CONCERNS

This stage applies where concerns are ongoing, recurring, or indicate that short-term support alone is not sufficient.

This aligns with **Pathway B (ongoing support needs)** within the Student Support & Intervention Framework.

At this stage:

- The Student Support Lead will meet with the student to discuss concerns and explore support needs
- The student will be actively involved in agreeing appropriate support measures
- Additional internal or external support may be recommended where appropriate
- A risk assessment may be completed where needed to inform safe and effective participation

All agreed support arrangements will be recorded in writing and shared with relevant staff where appropriate to ensure consistent support.

### **Possible Outcomes of Stage 2:**

a) The concern is resolved with no further action required at this time.

b) A structured support plan is agreed between the student and the Student Support Lead. This will outline agreed support measures, review points, and any additional services involved.

c) Where appropriate, the level of support is adjusted, and the case moves into **enhanced monitoring and continued support (Pathway D – early-stage concern management)** to ensure the student can continue training safely and effectively.

### STAGE 3 - CONTINUING OR SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS

The College reserves the right to implement precautionary measures (e.g. temporary suspension from specific activities, modified participation) where necessary to manage risk while a case is under consideration.

This stage applies where:

- concerns are significant or ongoing, or
- previous support has not been sufficient to enable stable engagement, or
- there are concerns about the student's ability to continue training without additional intervention.

This aligns with **Pathway D (enhanced and significant support needs)** within the Student Support & Intervention Framework.

A meeting will be arranged with the Head of Students.

Where appropriate and with the student's consent, medical or specialist input may be requested to support decision-making. Where information is shared with third parties or external professionals, this will normally be with the student's consent, unless there are overriding safeguarding concerns.

The student may be accompanied by a friend or representative.

Decisions will be based on:

- Evidence from previous support and interventions
- Professional or medical input where available
- Consideration of reasonable adjustments and support options
- The student's ability to engage safely, effectively, and sustainably in training

The outcome will be confirmed in writing **within five working days**.

### **Possible outcomes of Stage 3:**

#### **a) Continued support with no further formal action**

No additional measures are required at this time, and existing support continues.

#### **b) Structured support and review period**

A structured support plan is agreed with the student and Head of Students, including clear review points and ongoing monitoring to support sustained engagement.

#### **c) Adjusted study arrangements**

A temporary adjustment to training may be agreed where needed to support the student's wellbeing and ability to continue effectively. This may include a period of interruption of studies, agreed collaboratively between the Head of Students and the student.

#### **d) Referral to Stage 4 – Fitness to Study Panel**

Where there are serious concerns about the student's ongoing ability to continue training safely and effectively, the case will be referred by the Head of Students to Stage 4 for a formal Fitness to Study Panel.

If a student is unable to engage with agreed support arrangements, or if concerns remain despite intervention, the case may also be referred to Stage 4.

### **STAGE 4 - SERIOUS OR PERSISTENT CONCERNS**

This stage is used where there are serious or persistent concerns about a student's ability to continue training safely, effectively, and sustainably, despite prior support and intervention.

The College may require independent medical or professional evidence and reserves the right to seek clarification where evidence is unclear or insufficient.

A Fitness to Study Panel will be convened by the Head of Students and will include at least two senior members of staff, typically drawn from, Panel members will

have no prior direct involvement in the case where this would give rise to a conflict of interest.

- Principal and Artistic Director
- Academic Director
- Head of Courses
- Heads of Department

The student will be invited to submit evidence and may attend the panel or be represented.

Where appropriate, the panel may request medical or specialist advice to support its consideration.

The panel will ensure:

- All relevant information has been considered
- The student has had a fair opportunity to contribute
- Decisions are proportionate and support-led
- All reasonable support options have been explored

Decisions will be made on the balance of probabilities, taking into account:

- The nature and severity of the concerns
- Evidence provided (including medical or professional input)
- The effectiveness of previous support measures
- Risks to the student and others
- The feasibility of reasonable adjustments

### **Possible Panel Outcomes**

The Panel will determine outcomes, rather than recommend, to ensure clarity of authority. The panel may recommend one or more of the following:

- **Short-term interruption of training** to allow time for assessment, recovery, or access to support services
- **Time-limited supported intermission** with conditions designed to support return to study where appropriate
- **Adjusted return-to-study plan**, including repetition of a period of study where necessary to support successful continuation
- **Voluntary withdrawal or permanent withdrawal from training**, where it is determined that there is no reasonable prospect of safe or sustainable continuation in the short to medium term

These outcomes are not punitive in nature and are intended to ensure that any decision taken is in the best interests of the student's wellbeing, safety, and ability to succeed in training.

## RETURN TO STUDY

The College will assess return to study based on:

- Evidence of recovery or stabilisation
- The student's ability to meet programme demands
- Risk assessment outcomes
- Availability of appropriate support mechanisms

This process is support-led and not disciplinary in nature, and decisions will not be used to impose academic or behavioural sanctions.

In line with the Intermission Policy where a student has intermitted or been required to withdraw under this policy, return to study will normally require:

- Evidence from an appropriate medical or relevant professional confirming fitness to return

- Engagement with the Student Support Lead or Head of Students to agree a support plan
- A risk assessment where appropriate

The College reserves the right to determine whether sufficient evidence has been provided to support a safe and successful return.

A phased return or conditions of study may be applied.

## **THE RIGHT TO APPEAL**

Appeals will be considered by a senior member of staff or panel not previously involved in the case, ensuring independence and procedural fairness. Your appeal should be submitted to [mattcole@laine-theatre-arts.co.uk](mailto:mattcole@laine-theatre-arts.co.uk) within 10 days of receiving the recommendation and may include additional/alternative supporting evidence. The Principal and Artistic Director will investigate your appeal and you will be sent a letter notifying you of the decision within 30 days of the receipt of your appeal.

Appeals will be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

- a) Procedural irregularity
- b) New evidence not previously available
- c) Disproportionate outcome

If the appeal is rejected, a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter will be issued. This formal letter confirms that the College's internal appeals process has been fully exhausted and marks the final stage of the institution's procedures, allowing BA students to apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for an independent external review.

The appeal outcome will confirm whether:

- The original decision is upheld
- The decision is modified

- The case is referred for reconsideration

The College will maintain a record of cases considered under this policy and will undertake annual review and thematic analysis.

- A summary report will be provided to the Academic Board to support oversight of student wellbeing, continuation, and regulatory compliance.

### **ESCALATING YOUR COMPLAINT TO THE OFFICE FOR INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATORS AND UTILISING THE OIA SCHEME (BA STUDENTS ONLY)**

If a student remains dissatisfied following completion of internal procedures, they may be eligible to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA will review whether the College has followed its procedures fairly and reasonably. The OIA is an independent body that reviews complaints from students in higher education institutions fairly and impartially. If you remain unsatisfied with the response to your complaint by LTA or feels your concerns have not been adequately addressed, you can submit your complaint to the OIA for further review by accessing the OIA website at [www.oiahe.org](http://www.oiahe.org) and submitting a complaint form via the MyOIA portal.

The College is committed to ensuring that students are aware of their rights and options for seeking resolution and encourages all students to utilise the OIA Scheme where they feel it necessary.

The College will monitor the application of this policy to ensure it supports positive student outcomes, continuation, and wellbeing in line with its regulatory requirements.

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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