



Supporting Students in Distress

A guide for Staff

Updated March 2021

Most students will cope well with the stresses of life and their academic study given reasonable support from their friends, family and academic tutors. Sometimes they need more than this. If you feel you need to, or are requested to give a student extra assistance, it is important to help within the boundaries of what you feel competent to do.

This guide gives you advice on dealing with both crises and more everyday situations. It has been produced to:

- a) Help you to recognise when a student may be in difficulty.
- b) Provide advice to help you respond/refer appropriately and effectively.
- c) Remind you of

Confidentiality

The purpose of sharing information is to ensure that the student receives the appropriate support at the appropriate time. Consideration should always be taken regarding what is appropriate and relevant to share. The personal information a student might disclose

The key points for supporting a student in distress are:

- Speak with the student in a private area to retain confidentiality
- Listen, and acknowledge what the student is saying
- Make it clear that help is available
- Be honest and open about what support you are able to provide and what you will need someone else to provide

You will also need to consider the following:

- Do I have the time to provide the support that is needed?
- Do I have the expertise are you comfortable providing the support that is needed?

If your answers are NO to either of those two questions support the student to access suitable support through Student Services or specialised support.

Gender Based Violence

If the student's distress is relating to Gender Based Violence (Domestic Abuse, Rape, Sexual Assault, Harassment, Stalking, Forced Marriage and Commercial Sexual Exploitation) there is a specific document for how to address this here <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/sexual-harassment-and-violence/> It is important that any issue relating to GBV is dealt with following the correct procedures as there are specific considerations in regards to timescales, reporting and referral routes.

Bullying and Harassment

If the student's distress is related to Bullying and Harassment, QMU have an Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy that should be referred to. You can access it <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/committees-regulations-policies-and-procedures/regulations-policies-and-procedures/bullying/>

IF IT IS URGENT: What you should do if the situation IS urgent

It IS urgent if:

You believe the student may be at risk of harm, or at risk of harming others.

You are concerned for one or more of the following reasons. The student:

- May be at risk of serious harm.
- Expresses suicidal thoughts.
- Is behaving out of character.
- Is violent or threatening violence to people or property.



University Support Services

Emergency, dial 2222 4.3o0000di

Useful numbers

Emergency 999 (or 112)
(from internal QMU phones, dial 2222 instead)

NHS 24 111 (calls are free)

Breathing Space 0800 83 85 87
www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

