



Student Support Through Studies Policy

For their own well-being, it is important that all students are 'able to train.' 'Able to train' refers to the ability of a student to commit fully and enthusiastically to their training and to meet the expectations that the course and the training requires. This should be possible without hindering the work of other students or staff, regardless of personal circumstances, personal health or well-being. This applies to all students, including those who have disclosed a particular condition, disability or impairment.

The training at IDSA prepares students for the requirements of the professional theatre, film and television industry and is primarily an experiential and embodied training requiring a high degree of dedication. Therefore, to succeed, a student must be able to achieve industry standards of punctuality, attendance and behaviour. This policy is in place to allow IDSA to support any student whose health, well-being and/or behaviour is, or appears to be at risk of, having a significant detrimental impact upon their training. IDSA is committed to supporting student wellbeing and recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health is crucial to student learning and achievement. It stands as a policy separately and independently from the breaches of Code of Conduct, and subsequently the resulting Disciplinary procedures as stated in the Disciplinary Policy.

The procedures stated in this policy can be used by any member of staff who is sufficiently concerned about a student, and so may follow the steps laid out in Stages 1,2 and 3. Although students may raise concerns, ultimately it is not their responsibility to manage the situation, so once raised, they must allow the staff member to refer the matter and follow the procedures accordingly.

The following lists reasonable expectations of any student:



– That they demonstrate they are able to attend and engage effectively in a range of classes, workshops, rehearsals, lectures and tutorials including all staff, students and professionals, with reasonable adjustments if required.

-that they are mindful of the needs of the class as a whole and do not unnecessarily disrupt the learning or rehearsal period

– That they can demonstrate evidence of undertaking private study or activity without supervision.

– That they can participate in assessments throughout the academic year, with reasonable adjustments if required.

– That they arrive consistently at IDSA at the time required and meet other attendance requirements.

– That they are aware of their own health and safety and that of others, following guidelines, including changing their behaviour if they are instructed to do so to avoid breaching health and safety or code of conduct requirements.

– That they are abiding by the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

In cases where these expectations are not being met the Support Through Studies policy may be applied.



Disabled students and reasonable adjustments

IDSA has a legal and moral obligation to identify barriers that a disabled student might face in their training and to take steps ('reasonable adjustments') to identify and remove these barriers wherever possible. There is every reason to expect that a student with long-term disability or health condition will successfully complete their training.

When should the ability to train policy be applied?

The policy may be applied in relation to student behaviour while on Studio premises, hired premises or on industry placements outside IDSA. Each application of the policy will be based on individual circumstances.

The following list provides examples of situations when the policy may be applied, but it should not be considered exhaustive.

The student discloses difficulties relating to alcohol or drug problems or other personal circumstances and where this means that they behave in a manner which gives cause for concern.

A student has disclosed a disability or injury and reasonable adjustments and appropriate support are in place, however the student has continued, ongoing, insurmountable difficulties in meeting the core elements of the training.

A third party such as another student, staff member, or healthcare professional, reports concerns about a student's health or personal circumstances which are having a negative impact on their ability to engage with their studies.

Multiple complaints are received about the student from other students or



staff and/or there are concerns about the impact of the student's behaviour consistently, negatively and unreasonably affecting staff or fellow students' time.

The student is in serious and continued breach of the attendance policy or code of conduct.

The student behaves in a way that would usually be considered a disciplinary matter but there is reason to believe this may be due to underlying cause(s) which could provide mitigating factors.

Limitations

The Support Through Studies policy should be distinguished from other policies and procedures:

- **Disciplinary Policy (student misconduct):** when a student may have formal sanctions applied to them owing to a contravention of the student code of conduct, rules and regulations. Students may be referred to disciplinary procedures when their behaviour continues to be disruptive to students and/or staff and there is no indication of the student's willingness to engage with the Support Through Studies procedure.
- **Reasonable adjustments (Guide to Student Support):** this outlines the steps that IDSA will take to accommodate disabled students' needs and to make any short-term adjustments to the training for other students.

Confidentiality

This policy will be managed in accordance with IDSA's obligations under the Data Protection Act (1998) and, where appropriate, The Equality Act (2010) and will be applied in accordance with IDSA's obligations for data protection and



student confidentiality. IDSA will seek the student's informed consent before disclosing sensitive information and consider the student's best interests before disclosing information to a third party. Information will be disclosed in accordance with the terms agreed by the student. IDSA will respect a student's right to withhold consent for the disclosure of sensitive information but will ensure the student is made aware of the implications of non-disclosure. IDSA may breach a student's confidentiality under exceptional circumstances (for example, where there is a reasonable risk that the student might do harm to him/herself or to other students or members of IDSA or by breaking the law)

What happens when a student's Ability to Train is questioned?

Students and/or staff should bring the matter to the attention of the Vice, Principal, Head of Acting, in the first instance. They will then, in consultation with other senior members of staff where appropriate, follow the procedures outlined below.

At all and any stages used, a risk assessment should be undertaken to identify the level of risk to the student and/or others and to consider whether the student's presence within IDSA puts the student and/or others at an unacceptable level of risk, at detriment to their studies, or exacerbates the student's difficulties. All appropriate evidence should be included within the risk assessment. This will include ensuring that IDSA makes sure that a range of staff at an appropriate level of seniority can be involved in any process to avoid, for example, the student not feeling represented.

Usually there will be a three stage process once it has been established that a Ability to train issue has arisen. However, any stage of the process may be entered at any time, as deemed appropriate to the circumstances following the risk assessment. In exceptional cases of risk, and on the senior member of staff's judgement, the process may move directly to Stage Three. The procedure is designed to be as flexible as possible to meet the needs of the student and IDSA, therefore similarly, a case that has reached Stage 3 may be



de-escalated as appropriate down to Stage 2 or Stage 1. At all stages, a note of the agreement will be recorded which sets out what is expected of the student.

The three stages are as follows:

Stage One: Initial Concerns

Stage Two: Continuing and/or significant concerns

Stage Three: Case conference for highly significant, serious or persistent concerns

Details of the procedures for each of these stages is outlined on the next page.



Procedures

Stage One: Emerging or Initial concerns

This is an informal stage. It is expected that this can be handled within the teaching team of the department, with advice from the Principal as necessary. The Vice, Principal, Head of Acting or suitable senior member of staff will have a conversation with the student setting out concerns, how or why the student is not meeting his or her obligations and strategies for resolving the situation.

The possible outcomes at Stage One in the process are:

- The matter is considered resolved and no further action is needed;
- An action plan is established which may include referral to additional support services;
- The matter is referred directly to the next stage or, in serious cases, to Stage Three.

Stage Two: Continuing and/or Significant Concerns

The Course Director, or a member of staff nominated by the Course Director, will have a formal meeting with the student which outlines the continuing problems and the agreed strategy for managing the situation and a reasonable timeframe for seeing improvement.

The possible outcomes at Stage Two in the process are:



- A new action plan is agreed upon with the student which may include further referral to support services, and/or a review reverting to Stages One, Two or Three of the procedure, as appropriate;
- The student decides that they wish to interrupt studies and defer for a period, with an agreed review of the case before recommencing to ensure they are fit to return;
- The student is made aware that if there is no improvement, or where a new action plan cannot be agreed upon, the matter will be escalated to the next stage.

Stage Three: Case conference for highly significant, serious or persistent concerns

If there has been no resolution of the problems or change in behaviour, or in serious cases such as where the student is deemed to be a risk either to themselves or others), the situation will move to a case conference.

This will be invoked if:

- the student does not agree or is not engaging with a recommendation
- if in the opinion of the principal, the case is sufficiently serious to warrant immediate referral without moving through the prior stages.

The Heads of Acting will convene a Ability to train Panel which will comprise at least two senior staff. The Panel will include at least one person who has had no direct involvement in the particular student's case, so this might include



appropriate external nominees.

The Panel may organise proceedings at its discretion and may call witnesses if required. The Panel may also request further medical evidence.

The possible outcomes at Stage Three in the process are:

- Suspension with conditions for a period up to twelve months. A student who is suspended from IDSA may be prohibited from participating in IDSA activities and may also be prohibited from entering IDSA premises or have restricted rights to enter the premises. The terms of the suspension will be notified to the student in writing, depending on the circumstances of the case. The decision to suspend a student shall be reviewed as necessary by the Panel.

- Exclusion or requirement to withdraw. If the Panel concludes, taking into account the individual circumstances of the case and any supporting evidence, that there is no reasonable prospect of the student re-engaging with their programme, then the student may be permanently excluded or required to withdraw. This outcome will only be reached in the most serious cases.

- Any other action considered to be appropriate and proportionate. The outcome of a Panel meeting will normally be discussed with the student in person and confirmed in writing.

Right of appeal/complaint

Following a decision to either suspend a student or discontinue them from the programme of study, that student has the right of appeal against the decision.

The grounds of appeal are set out as follows:



Grounds under which an ABILITY to Train appeal may be made	
A	That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the Support Through Studies process which affected the Case Conference decision
B	That there is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to be considered at the relevant time the Case Conference decision was made, and which warrants further consideration of the case
C	That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the Support Through Studies process
D	That the decision is unreasonable and/or will have a disproportionate negative impact on the student. The reasons why the decision is unreasonable and/or will have a disproportionate negative impact must be clearly articulated and supported with relevant satisfactory evidence, where applicable.

An appeal should be submitted to the Director of Operations within 21 days of the formal written notification of the Case Conference decision and clearly state upon which ground(s) the appeal is made and provide supporting evidence.

The Principal shall appoint a member of staff previously unconnected with either the case or the student, as an Appeal Adjudicator, to review the appeal and determine whether the case warrants referral to a new Case Conference.



The appeal reviewer will determine whether the Case should be referred back to the original members of the Case Conference. In cases concerning allegations of prejudice or bias, or on the judgment of the appeal reviewer a new conference may be convened which does not include the original parties. Members of the new Case Conference may interview the original conference members to gather information and understand the context and events which led to the Stage 3 process.

The new Case Conference Decision following an appeal is final.

Return to training

IDSA will arrange a return to training process for any student who has intermitted or been suspended from study. This will involve as many members of the original Panel as possible. In the case of intermittence/suspension on medical grounds, further medical evidence will be requested from the student to support their case for returning to training. Given the practical nature of training, and as appropriate, students will also undertake an assessment by relevant teaching staff to ensure that they are fit to cope with the physical demands of the training. Both the outcome of this assessment and any medical information will be taken into account in making a decision about permitting a student to return.

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