

King's College London

Prolonged lack of contact procedure

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out a procedure to ensure that King's College London has effective and proportionate responses to reports of a student's disengagement from study and failure to reply to university communications.
- 1.2 Students are expected to engage with their studies on a regular basis, throughout the academic year, and – where they do not do so – this may give rise to concerns about their welfare and wellbeing. The following guidance includes a process and email templates to encourage students to engage and access support if a staff member is concerned about their welfare, due to a prolonged lack of contact.
- 1.3 This guidance has been created by Student Services in collaboration with the Personal Tutoring Manager, and has received feedback from staff from a range of faculties. In response to the previous move to remote work and study, as a result of COVID-19, this guidance has added in reference to remote engagement and support.
- 1.4 This process acknowledges that a lack of physical engagement with studies can be a sign of an underlying welfare issue, and cause concern to staff, and that different considerations will need to be made for remote study.

2. Definition of "Prolonged Lack of Contact"

- 2.1 A student who has failed to attend lectures, to submit assignments or to reply to university communications for a period which is pertinent within any given faculty.
- 2.2 This procedure acknowledges that departmental requirements for engagement will differ across the university – and across UG, PGT and PGR levels of study – and so the timeframes given for making the initial contact with the student in question, and the following steps, should be amended in line with local policies and/or requirements. Local processes may also mean that another member of staff takes the lead on student contact, but we have used the personal tutor/Senior Tutor as a suggestion here.
- 2.3 Where there are concerns that the student may be "missing" i.e.

"anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or risk of harm to themselves or another"

then please refer to the KCL Missing Person Procedure

3. Practical application of procedure

- 3.1 Each department will allocate designated members of staff to take ownership of each stage of the procedure. Your faculty's [Designated Safeguarding Officer](#) can provide additional support and guidance at any stage of the process or for specific cases.
- 3.2 As part of the process, it is recommended that your designated [Faculty Wellbeing Advisor](#) contacts IT to request information about the last time the student was active on KEATS and email. This may indicate that the student is engaging in some way with their studies, and therefore reduce some of the concern that has been raised about their welfare.
- 3.3 If the concerns are later escalated to Student of Concern, then these details should be included in the [Student of Concern](#) referral.
- 3.4 If the student responds to confirm that they are OK at any stage, or states that they do not require support, they should be reminded that they can contact the department (e.g. their personal tutor) should any issues arise, and that they can access support through:

[Student Services Online](#)
[Money Advice](#)
[Housing Advice](#)
[Visa & International Student Advice](#)
[Counselling & Mental Health Advice](#)
[Crisis Support](#)
[Togetherall](#)
[Pro Counselling Out of Hours Support](#)

- 3.5 Students can also be gently reminded about the importance of engagement. Under academic regulations there can be consequences for persistent failure to respond to College communications or instructions (as per the [G28 Academic Regulations](#)).
- 3.6 Where professional programmes have additional standards which need to be met, e.g. professionalism and fitness to practice policies, these policies may override this guidance.
- 3.7 Emails to students must be sent to KCL email addresses, with personal email addresses copied in. Student contact information can be found on Student Records. It is advisable to keep copies of these emails, and any other relevant contact with the student, in a folder, in case it is needed to support a student case in the future.

4. Process to follow

- 4.1 Initial concern is raised by a personal tutor (or another designated person in the department)
- 4.2 Check if student has failed to engage with teaching sessions for a minimum of two weeks (time scale subject to department or programmes requirements/processes).
- 4.3 In the case of remote study - if the student has not engaged with learning materials or staff members for over two weeks. Other factors may also trigger this initial concern and can follow this process e.g. failure to attend placement
- 4.4 Please note that there are templates specifically for Post Graduate Students under section 6.

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King's College London Prolonged Lack of Student Contact Procedure

Department notice a student has not engaged with teaching activities – physical or remote. This can be identified by a lecturer, personal tutor or fellow students, etc raising a concern. [A minimum of two weeks without engagement is an example, but is subject to department policy, level of teaching etc.]



Personal tutor emails student at their KCL email address, and can copy in their personal address, offering support. Signpost to Student Services Online.



After 5 working days (or 2 if there are concerns around the student's wellbeing) a phone call should be made from the department to the student. For remote study, a Microsoft Teams invite should be sent via Outlook.



If there is no response to the phone call or Teams meeting invite, a second email is sent from the personal tutor encouraging a response within 5 working days, or it will have to be escalated within the department.



At this stage the designated [Faculty Wellbeing Advisor](#) for your faculty can contact IT to request details of when the student last accessed KEATS/Email and to carry out checks with Security to ascertain the students activity on campus. This may indicate that the student is engaging with their learning.



After a further 5 working days, the Senior Tutor or Programme Director emails the student requesting that the student gets in touch and that if they do not hear from them within 1 working day, they will raise them as a Student of Concern.



The department escalates the concern using the [Student of Concern Procedure](#) – select the primary concern as 'prolonged lack of contact'. A Student Welfare Advisor will contact the student and offer support.



Next steps: The Student of Concern team will:

- ascertain if the student is engaging with the university in any other ways (e.g., asking residences to conduct a welfare check if they are in halls)
- will identify if the student is engaging with any other university support services
- will determine if police or next of kin involvement is needed (in line with the "Student Emergency Contact Procedure")



If the Student of Concern team do not get a response from the student, but are confident that they are engaging with the university in some form (e.g. using KEATS or libraries, safe at residences), they may contact the department to propose they hold a Support for Study meeting under the [G30 Academic Policy](#) at either Stage One, Stage Two or Stage Three. Alternatively, the department may be invited to consider acting under [G28 Academic Regulations](#).



If all avenues have been exhausted and where there are significant welfare/mental health concerns, then the Student of Concern team will consider reporting the student to the Police as a missing person.

The Police are sometimes reticent to act on a missing person report unless we have first checked that the student is at their address. The SOC Welfare team will consider carrying out a home visit where a risk assessment has indicated that it is safe to do so and in accordance with KCL Home Visit Procedure

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5. Templates

5.1 First email to student after lack of engagement first noted:

Subject: Checking in

Dear [STUDENT NAME]

I've noticed that you haven't attended/engaged with teaching sessions recently and want to check in with you to see if everything is OK. Please remember that if you are having any problems, either with the course or outside of your academic life at King's, I'd be happy to meet with you – e.g. via Microsoft Teams – to discuss any ways that I can help. As a reminder, you can find out about the range of student support offered by King's through [Student Services Online](#). I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards, _____

N.B. If the student is known to you for any existing welfare reasons, follow this first email contact with a phone call within 2 working days (if no response received from the student).

5.2 If, after 5 days, there is no response then please follow up with a telephone call to the student from Personal Tutor, Senior Tutor (or another designated person in the department)

"Please can I speak to [STUDENT NAME]?"

"I've noticed that you haven't attended teaching sessions recently and want to check in with you to see if everything is OK. Please remember that if you are having any problems, either with the course or outside of your academic life at King's, I'd be happy to meet with you to discuss any ways that I can help."

N.B. If someone other than the student picks up the phone, or you get through to voicemail, explain that you are trying to reach the stud and ask for them to call back, leaving your name and number, but do not give details of the nature of your call.

5.3 For students engaging in remote study, please send an invite to a Microsoft Teams Meeting using your Outlook calendar.

Dear [STUDENT NAME]

I have noticed that you haven't engaged with remote teaching recently, and I want to check in with you to see if everything is OK. Please respond to this meeting invite and suggest alternative times if this is not suitable for you. Please check this [guide](#) for help with using Microsoft Teams.

Kind regards, _____

5.4 If no response to the phone call within 1 working day, or no response to the meeting invite within 2 working days - follow-up email from personal tutor (or another designated person in department).

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Subject: Following-up on contact with you

Dear [STUDENT NAME]

This is a reminder that you haven't replied to my email or to the telephone call/meeting invite from [NAME, ROLE]. As I am becoming increasingly concerned about your welfare, I will ask our faculty's Safeguarding Officer to look into when you were last active on online e.g. accessing KEATS, as this can give an indication of whether you are engaging with your studies remotely. If I do not hear from you within 5 working days, I will need to inform the [Head of Department/Senior Tutor/other designated person] due to my concern. Please do reply as soon as possible to let me and the department know how you're getting on, and if there is anything we can do to help. As a reminder, you can find out about the range of student support offered by King's College through Student Services Online. I hope to hear from you soon. Kind regards, _____

5.5 If no response received within 5 working days – contact from Senior Tutor or Programme Director (or another designated person in department).

Subject: URGENT – RESPONSE REQUIRED

Dear [STUDENT NAME]

My name is [NAME, ROLE] and I'm contacting you as details have been passed to me due to the concerns [your personal tutor] has raised about your lack of attendance/engagement and the difficulties in contacting you.

I wish to advise you that following the emails sent by your personal tutor [or other person] on [DATE] and [DATE], and the telephone call/meeting invite from [NAME] on [DATE] the department now considers you to have been out of contact for [e.g., more than three weeks]. Although we appreciate that [you have been active on KEATS recently, and] at times keeping in touch can be difficult, we would really like to hear from you to confirm that you are OK, are seeking support elsewhere, or to help you identify support available through the university.

If you are having any difficulty accessing support at King's, I am happy to contact an individual service on your behalf to flag your need for support.

[Staff to contact counselling@kcl.ac.uk, advice@kcl.ac.uk, disability@kcl.ac.uk]

As I am concerned for your welfare, if I do not hear from you within 1 working day, I will raise you as a [Student of Concern](#) with the university's Student Services. This will allow a member of Student Services to contact you and determine if you are in any risk, and to take the necessary actions to make sure that you are safe.

Kind regards, _____

6. Templates for communications with Post Graduate Students

6.1 Initial contact comes from supervisor (or another designated person in department).

Suggestion: checking in when the student has not engaged with their programme for a minimum of one week (**time scale subject to department or programmes requirements/processes**).

Remote study alternative – the student has not engaged with progress reports or staff members for over two weeks.

Other factors may also trigger this initial concern and can follow this process.

Subject: Checking in

Dear **[STUDENT NAME]**

I've noticed that you haven't **attended/engaged with (say what, submission of work, missed supervision, lab attendance etc)** recently and want to check in with you to see if everything is OK. Please remember that if you are having any problems, either with the programme or outside of your academic life at King's, I'd be happy to meet with you – **e.g. via Microsoft Teams** – to discuss any ways that I can help.

As a reminder, you can find out about the range of student support offered by King's through [Student Services Online](#).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards, _____

N.B. If the student is known to you for any existing welfare reasons, follow this first email contact with a phone call within 2 working days (if no response received from the student).

6.2 If no response received after 3-5 working days – phone call from supervisor, personal tutor or PG coordinator or another designated person in department to the student. Remote study alternative – send an invite to a Microsoft Teams meeting.

“Please can I speak to **[STUDENT NAME]?”**

“I've noticed that you haven't attended/engaged with (say what**) recently and want to check in with you to see if everything is OK. Please remember that if you are having any problems, either with the programme or outside of your academic life at King's, I'd be happy to meet with you to discuss any ways that I can help.”**

N.B. If someone other than the student picks up the phone, or you get through to voicemail, explain that you are trying to reach the student and ask for them to call back, leaving your name and number, but do not give details of the nature of your call.

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Invite to Microsoft Teams meeting – set up as a meeting invite using your Outlook calendar.

Dear [STUDENT NAME]

I have noticed that you haven't responded to my email or meeting invite and I want to check in with you to see if everything is OK. Please respond to this meeting invite, and/or suggest alternative times if this is not suitable for you. Please check this guide for [help with using Microsoft Teams](#).

Kind regards, _____

6.3 If no response to the phone call within 1 working day, or no response to the meeting invite within 2 working days - follow-up email from Supervisor, PG coordinator or Personal tutor (or another designated person in department).

Subject: Following-up on contact with you

Dear [STUDENT NAME]

This is a reminder that you haven't replied to my email or to the **telephone call/meeting invite** from [NAME, ROLE]. As I am becoming increasingly concerned about your welfare, I will ask our **faculty's Safeguarding Officer** to look into when you were last active on student records or accessed other online resources, as this can give an indication of whether you are engaging with your studies any other way.

If I do not hear from you within 2 working days I will need to inform the **[Head of Department/ Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, PG coordinator/ other designated person]** due to my concern. Please do reply as soon as possible to let me and the department know how you're getting on, and if there is anything we can do to help.

As a reminder, you can find out about the range of student support offered by King's College through [Student Services Online](#).

I hope to hear from you soon.

Kind regards, _____

6.4 If no response received within 2 working days – contact from Supervisor, PG coordinator or Personal tutor or another designated person in department.

Subject: URGENT – RESPONSE REQUIRED

Dear [STUDENT NAME]

My name is [NAME, ROLE] and I'm contacting you as details have been passed to me due to the concerns raised about your lack of **attendance/engagement** and the difficulties in making contact with you.

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I wish to advise you that following the emails sent by your **Supervisor, PG coordinator or Personal tutor or another designated person in department** on **[DATE]** and **[DATE]**, and the **telephone call/meeting invite** from **[NAME]** on **[DATE]** the department now considers you to have been out of contact for **[e.g. more than three weeks]**. Although we appreciate that at times keeping in touch can be difficult, we would really like to hear from you to confirm that you are OK, are seeking support elsewhere, or to help you identify support available through the university.

If you are having any difficulty accessing support at King's, I am happy to contact an individual service on your behalf to flag your need for support.

[Staff to contact counselling@kcl.ac.uk, advice@kcl.ac.uk, disability@kcl.ac.uk]

As I am concerned for your welfare, if I do not hear from you within 1 working day, I will raise you as a **Student of Concern** with the university's Student Support Services. This will allow a member of Student Services to contact you and determine if you are in any risk, and to take the necessary actions to make sure that you are safe.

Kind regards, _____