ITALIA CONTI

Support Through Studies Policy

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1. Statement of Purpose

The Support through Studies policy is designed to support the needs of students.

Italia Conti 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 academic achievement. This policy is in place to allow Italia Conti 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 academic studies and/or training, or that of other students or the operation of the institution.

The training at Italia Conti prepares students for the requirements of the professional theatre, film and television industry and is, primarily, an experiential and embodied training requiring a high proportion of contact time. Therefore, to succeed, a student must be able to achieve industry standards of engagement, punctuality and attendance.

This policy may be used for any student whose ability to properly engage with their studies and/or the support on offer at Italia Conti is compromised as a result of their health, well-being, circumstances or a disability.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to maintain the progress of students in a supportive environment, whilst being mindful of Italia Conti's duty of care to all its students
- to manage any concerns and situations in positive, sensitive and co-ordinated manner.

2. Definitions

'Support through Studies' refers to the ability of a student to commit fully to their training and to meet the expectations that the course and the training require, without impacting negatively on them or 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 disability or impairment.

3. Expectations of any student

Students should be able to:

- Demonstrate that they are able to attend and engage effectively in a range of classes, workshops, rehearsals, lectures and tutorials including with staff, students and professionals, with adjustments for a disability if required.

- Demonstrate that they can undertake private study or activity without supervision.

- Participate in assessments throughout the academic year, with appropriate adjustments for a disability if required.

- Arrive consistently at Italia Conti at the time required and meet other attendance requirements.

- Demonstrate awareness of their own health and safety and that of others, including changing behaviour if it is pointed out to them that they are potentially breaching health and safety requirements.

- Abide by the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

4. Relationship with other policies and procedures

The Support through Studies policy should be distinguished from other policies and procedures as set out in the Student Handbook:

- **Intermittence:** when a student requests a temporary interruption to their studies on the course owing to ill health or personal circumstances.

- **Mitigating Circumstances:** when a student is unable to participate in a specific assessment owing to ill health or personal circumstances.

- **Disciplinary Policy (student misconduct):** when a student has formal sanctions applied to them owing to a breach of the Student Code of Conduct and / or academic regulations.

- **Attendance Policy:** this sets out the requirements for student attendance and the sanctions that may be applied if a student fails to attend regularly.

- **Reasonable adjustments (Guide to Student Support):** this outlines the steps that Italia Conti will take to accommodate students' needs; for example, disability, Special Educational Needs or any appropriate short-term adjustments required.

There may be times when Italia Conti decides that the above procedures are not appropriate to a student's circumstances or in their best interests. In such cases the Support through Studies policy may be used in order to identify how best to support the student.

5. Disabled students and reasonable adjustments

Italia Conti has a legal obligation to identify barriers that a disabled student might face in their training and to take steps ('reasonable adjustments') to identify and to remove these barriers wherever possible. There is every reason to expect that a student with a long-term disability or health condition will successfully complete their training. Please see the Student Handbook's Guide to Learning Support for further details of how Italia Conti supports disabled students.

6. When should the Support through Studies policy be applied?

The policy may be applied in relation to a student's behaviour whilst on Italia Conti premises or on industry placements outside Italia Conti. 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:

- A student discloses difficulties relating to alcohol or drug problems or other personal circumstances which results in them behaving in a manner which gives cause for concern.

- A student has disclosed a disability and reasonable adjustments, and appropriate support are in place; however, the student has continuing, 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 the student's ability to engage with their studies.

- Multiple complaints are received and upheld about a student from other students or staff.

- A student is in serious and continued breach of the attendance policy and there is reason to believe that this may be due to underlying cause(s) which could provide mitigating factors.

- A 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.

The procedures stated in this policy can be used by any member of staff who is sufficiently concerned about a student.

Although students may raise concerns, ultimately it is not their responsibility to manage the situation, so once raised, they must allow a staff member to refer the matter and follow the procedures accordingly.

7. Confidentiality

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

Italia Conti will seek the student's informed consent before disclosing sensitive information and will 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.

Italia Conti 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.

Italia Conti may breach a student's confidentiality in 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 Italia Conti or by breaking the law).

8. What happens when a student's Support through Studies is questioned?

Higher Education
Students and/or staff should bring the matter to the attention of the Head of School, Course Leader or Head of Year and/or Head of Student Support Services in the first instance. They will then, in consultation with other senior members of staff where appropriate, follow the procedure outlined below.

Further Education
Students and/or staff should bring the matter to the attention of the Course Leader and/or member of the Student Wellbeing Team in the first instance. They will then, in consultation with other senior members of staff where appropriate, follow the procedure outlined below.

At each stage 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 Italia Conti may put the student and/or others at an unacceptable level of risk and/or may exacerbate the student's difficulties.

All appropriate evidence should be included within the risk assessment.

Italia Conti will seek to ensure that both male and female staff at an appropriate level of seniority are involved in any process where, for example, both Head of School or Course Leader and / or Head of Year are male, or both female.

9. Procedure

The Support through Studies procedure is designed to be as flexible as possible to meet the needs of the student and Italia Conti.

There will normally be a three-stage process once it has been established that a Support through Studies 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.

For example, in exceptional cases of risk, and on the Course Leader's judgement, the process may move directly to Stage Three. Similarly, a case that has reached Stage Three may be de-escalated as appropriate down to Stage Two or Stage One.

Italia Conti will seek to resolve issues at the earliest possible stage in the process and will use the procedure set out below to proactively identify and manage risk.

The student will be given at least [3 working days] notice of any meeting to be held as part of the Support through Studies process. Relevant documents will be shared with the student prior to the meeting unless there is an exceptional reason not to, such as the medical advice received has identified that this may place the student at risk of harm.

The student may be accompanied by a Student Representative, friend or relative to any meeting held as part of the Support through Studies process. Where the student is aged 16-18, their parent/guardian will also be invited to attend.

If the student fails to engage with the Support through Studies process or fails without good reason to attend a meeting, Italia Conti may make a decision about the student's capability to study based on the available information and any presenting risks.

At all stages, a note of the meeting will be recorded which sets out what is expected of the student. A copy will be sent to the student within [5] working days of the meeting.

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

Stage One (Informal): Emerging or Initial concerns

This will normally be handled within the teaching team of the department, with advice from Head of Student Services / Wellbeing as appropriate.

Higher Education
The Course Leader, or a designated member of staff nominated by the Head of School, will arrange a meeting with the student to have a conversation about the concerns, how or why the student is not meeting his or her obligations, and to explore strategies for resolving the situation.

Further Education
The Course Leader, or a designated member of staff nominated by the Course Leader, will arrange a meeting with the student to have a conversation about the concerns, how or why the student is not meeting his or her obligations, and to explore 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 agreed 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

A formal meeting will be arranged with the student which outlines the continuing problems and the agreed strategy for managing the situation and a reasonable timeframe for seeing improvement.

Higher Education
The Course Leader, or designated member of staff nominated by the Course Leader, will invite the student to a formal meeting to discuss the concerns, how or why the student is not meeting his or her obligations, and to review and agree strategies for resolving the situation. A member of the Student Welfare team will be available to attend.

Further Education
The Course Leader, or a designated member of staff nominated by the Course Leader, will invite the student to a formal meeting to discuss the concerns, how or why the student is not meeting his or her obligations, and to review and agree strategies for resolving the situation. A member of the Student Welfare team will be available to attend.

The possible outcomes at Stage Two in the process are:

- A new or revised action plan is agreed upon between Italia Conti and the student (and the student's parent/guardian, where the student is under 18), 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 their studies and intermit for a period of time, with an agreed review of the case by Italia Conti before recommencing to ensure they are fit to return; For HE students, this will be carried out in line with the partner university procedures for breaks in study or intermission. Further information regarding this can be found in Italia Conti's Withdrawals and Intermission procedure.

- 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: 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 and / or others), the student will be invited to attend a Case Conference with a Support through Studies Panel.

This will be invoked if:

- the student does not agree or is not engaging with a recommendation
- in the opinion of the Head of Student Services *and / or* a member of the Wellbeing Team *and /or* the Designated Safeguarding Lead the case is sufficiently serious to warrant immediate referral without moving through the prior stages.

The Head of Student Services will convene a Support through Studies Panel which will comprise at least three members of senior staff. The Panel will include at least one person

who has had no direct involvement in the student's case. This might include nominees from the following staff:

- Course Leader
- Head of Department
- Head of Year
- Designated Safeguarding Lead / representative from Wellbeing
- Course Management TEam
- QA representative

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:

- A new or revised action plan is agreed upon between Italia Conti and the student (and the student's parent/guardian, where the student is under 18), 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 their studies and intermit for a period of time, with an agreed review of the case by Italia Conti before recommencing to ensure they are fit to return;

- The student is suspended with or without conditions for a period up to twelve months. A student who is suspended from Italia Conti may be prohibited from participating in Italia Conti activities and may also be prohibited from entering Italia Conti premises or have restricted rights to enter the premises.

- The student is permanently excluded from Italia Conti. 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 panel may propose to the Principal that the student may be permanently excluded. 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, with confirmation in writing provided within [5] working days of the meeting.

10. Right of appeal/complaint

The student has the right of appeal at all stages and against all penalties.

The grounds of appeal are as follows:

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 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 Course Leader 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 Course Leader 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.

- If the Appeal Adjudicator determines that the case should be referred to a new Case Conference, he or she will determine whether or not it should be referred to the original members of the Panel. In cases concerning allegations of prejudice or bias, a new Panel may be convened which does not include the original parties.

- If it is determined that a new Case Conference with a new Panel should take place, at least two senior members of staff (one of whom may be the Course Leader) should undertake the new Case Conference.

A case conference with new members is likely to be held only where there is evidence of prejudice or bias, in which case the new members must consider the case without any influence from the original decision-makers.

The new Case Conference decision following an appeal is final.

11. Return to training

Italia Conti will arrange a return to training meeting during which an action plan will be agreed upon by Italia Conti and the student.

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.

12. Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Once the internal procedures have been exhausted i.e. once the final decision letter following an appeal has been sent to the student, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued by the Head of Studies and students are entitled to ask the OIA to consider any unresolved complaint: http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-tomake-a-complaint.aspx.

Linked policies

- Attendance policy
- Disability, ALS and Reasonable Adjustment Policy
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities Policy
- SEND policy
- Student Support and Wellbeing Policy

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