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Safeguard of campus community and student wellbeing in certain emergency situations

Type of Document:	Regulation
Purpose:	Rules that apply in circumstances where the safety and wellbeing of the campus community are at risk, and there is an emergency that enquires a student to be removed from the community due to severe emotional or psychiatric breakdown.
Approved by:	Rectorate
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Policy Owner¹:	Vice-Rector: Learning and Teaching
Policy Curator²:	Senior Director: Division Student Affairs
Keywords:	Student wellbeing; Campus Community; Self-harm, Substance abuse; Mental health; Discipline; Protect and Care
Validity:	In the event of an inconsistency between different versions of this Regulation, the English version prevails.

SU Policies are available at www.sun.ac.za/policies

¹ Policy Owner: Head(s) of Responsibility Centre(s) in which the policy functions.

² Policy Curator: Administrative head of the division responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the policy



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Reference number for this document	
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Rules: Safeguard of campus community and student wellbeing in certain emergency situations

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1. Introduction

These rules apply only in the event of an emergency or crisis situation, when other avenues for care, support, containment and treatment have been exhausted and are not enabling reliable care for the student to safeguard the wellbeing of the student and secure him/her from a significant and probable threat. This includes a threat and harm to the wider Stellenbosch University (SU) student and staff community and SU institution. This may include behaviours such as:

- 1.1. Self-harm and harm to others and property;
- 1.2. Irrational beliefs and behaviour, ungrounded in reality, coupled with significant lack of functioning by the student;
- 1.3. The student's presence on campus causes a major disturbance to other students, the community and the institution, and disrupts the order and management at SU; and
- 1.4. Acute substance abuse.

2. Temporary suspension

If the Rector or his/her delegate ("**the Rector**"), on the facts available and relating to the merits of the matter at that time, has reasonable grounds to believe that an emergency or crisis situation has arisen whereby a student experiences a serious emotional or psychiatric breakdown, and that the continued attendance and presence of the student at SU, and/or on SU campuses, and/or inclusion in residences, and/or events, poses:

- 2.1. A real and urgent danger to the mental or physical well-being of the student him/herself, to fellow students and/or to staff and/or individuals;
- 2.2. An imminent threat to maintain order and discipline at SU; and/or
- 2.3. A real and urgent risk of serious damage being done to or by the student, and/or to SU, and/or other students and/or the individuals' property;

then the Rector may, on these grounds, temporarily suspend the student from SU, campuses, residences and/or events.

3. Review committee

The student's temporary suspension from SU (and/or institution, residences, campuses, facility, events) by the Rector must be confirmed by a review committee within 5 [five] days after the decision for the temporary suspension.

This review committee shall consist of:

- 3.1. Vice-Rector Learning & Teaching (chair);
- 3.2. The Registrar;
- 3.3. Chief Director Facility Management;
- 3.4. Dean of the faculty in which the student is registered;
- 3.5. Senior Director Division Student Affairs (responsible for administration and secretariat of review committee);
- 3.6. Or any other person designated by each of these from within their Divisions; the Vice-Rector can only delegate to another Vice-Rector.
- 3.7. And any other person invited to the committee to perform a specific responsibility e.g. transformation, if and when required.

This review committee will consider the facts, context and consequences of the temporary suspension and must take into account any new information or change in facts.

The committee may decide on its own procedure which can include virtual meetings or discussion and round-robin decisions.

The decision by this committee is on the basis of consensus.

The review committee may:

- i. Confirm the decision of the Rector;
- ii. Revoke the decision by the Rector;
- iii. Amend the decision of the Rector;
- iv. Impose conditions of return and reintegration by the student.

4. Process of Administration

The Rector's decision must be communicated to the student in writing and further set-out the reasons for the temporary suspension and the conditions of return. This communication is managed by the office of the Division Student Affairs (DSAf).

The communication also includes the date and condition of the end of this temporary suspension and the responsible office which manages and assesses the compliance with the conditions for return. The most likely office to facilitate the return, reintegration and support of this student is the Centre for Student Counselling and Development and/or Campus Health.

This process is not a disciplinary finding or sanction but aims to support the student via 1) managing risk and containing damage, 2) ensuring care and treatment, and 3) ensuring reintegration into SU.

This temporary suspension is not recorded on the student's record or conduct document of the student. Should the suspension lead to short-term leave of absence being granted or prolonged interruption of study, these absences will be dealt with in accordance with the applicable rules.

5. Mental Health Care Act of South Africa

The principles of the Mental Health Care Act are reiterated here and aligned to SU's vision and intent, so as to firmly place this document within this framework:

SU recognises that:

- 5.1. Health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being and that mental health services should be enabled as part of primary, secondary and tertiary health care services' framework;
- 5.2. The Constitution of South Africa prohibits against any unfair discrimination of people;
- 5.3. Persons and the property of a person with mental disorders or mental disabilities, may at times require protection and that members of the public and their properties may similarly, at times, require protection from people with mental disorders or mental disabilities;
- 5.4. There is a need to promote the provision of mental health care services at SU in a manner which promotes the maximum mental well-being of users of mental health care services and communities at SU.

6. The Rector

These rules mandate the Rector to:

- 6.1. Issue a temporary suspension to a student from SU, and/or the SU residences or other facility, or event, in the event that an emergency and/or crisis situation arises which necessitates this drastic intervention; and

6.2. Take any other supplementary decision supporting the best interests of the student, other students and/or individuals, and that of SU.

7. Provisos

7.1. The student's temporary suspension from SU is subject to the care protocols as outlined in the various divisions of the SU – especially the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (DSAf) and Campus Health, and as aligned to the Mental Health Care Act of South Africa, 2002 (as amended);

7.2. The Rector bears the additional responsibilities and exercises the powers, duties and functions assigned to the Rector as outlined in the other relevant documents, guidelines and policies of the University;

7.3. The powers of the Rector may be delegated to a Vice-Rector or other delegate (this delegate may not be the chair of the review committee, as outlined in 3. above); and

7.4. The temporary suspension of a student on the grounds listed above is followed by care provision as outlined in the Mental Health Care Act of South Africa, 2002 (as amended).

8. References

Mental Health Care Act, Act 17 of 2002 (as amended)