



**Higher Education Services
Suicide Prevention
Policy**

July 2025

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1	A. Watson	28/07/25	Original version

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Higher Education Services Suicide Prevention Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 FutureLearn is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students. As a global platform serving diverse populations, it recognises the importance of proactively addressing mental health challenges, including suicide risk. This Suicide Prevention Policy outlines strategies aimed at early identification, support, education, and referral to appropriate resources for students who may be experiencing emotional distress as part of the ongoing work by [Universities UK](#) ("UUK").

2.0 Content Warning

2.1 This policy considers topics related to suicide, self-harm, and mental health vulnerabilities. It contains information that some readers may find distressing or triggering.

2.2 Support is always available, and students may find the information below useful:

2.2.1 Samaritans

Samaritans provide confidential, non-judgmental emotional support 24 hours a day to people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Students can contact Samaritans free by phoning 116 123 or via email on jo@samaritans.org.

2.2.2 NHS24 Mental Health Hub

Telephone advice and support on healthcare can be obtained from NHS24 by phoning 111. The Mental Health Hub is open 24/7.

2.2.3 The Listening Place

The Listening Place is open from 9am to 9pm, 7 days a week and offers face-to-face listening appointments for people who are experiencing suicidal thoughts. Students can self-refer online, or call 0203 9067676.

2.2.4 Shout Crisis Line

Shout is a free and confidential text messaging service, available 24/7 throughout the UK, for people who are struggling to cope.

2.2.5 PAPYRUS HOPELINE247

PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide is the UK charity dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people, up to 35 years of age. If students are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be, they can contact PAPYRUS HOPELINE247 for confidential support and practical advice.

Call: 0800 068 4141
Text: 07860 039 967
Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org.

2.2.6 International Advice & Support

The International Association for Suicide Prevention has information on support available, including a list of crisis helplines for most countries, outside of the UK.

The StayAlive App also has information about international resources, including more helplines and 'stay safe' plans, for both the UK and overseas.

3.0 Purpose and Scope

3.1 The purpose and scope of the policy is to form specific guidance whereby the wellbeing of students is considered paramount. It is based on UUK's Prevention, Intervention and Postvention guidance which enables FutureLearn to provide a structured approach to dealing with mental health issues.

4.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
Suicide Completion	The deliberate act of ending one's life.
Suicide Attempt	An intentional act in which an individual tries to end their life but survives.
Suicidal Feelings	Thoughts or plans about ending one's life, ranging from passive rumination to active planning.
Suicidal Behaviours	Includes ideation, risky acts, non-suicidal self-harm, and attempts.
Non-Suicidal Self-Harm	Deliberate harm without intent to die, often to relieve distress. It indicates mental health risk.
Cluster	Three or more suicides occurring close in time/place.
Contagion	Exposure to suicide (e.g. reporting) can trigger suicidal thoughts or attempts in others.

5.0 Awareness

5.1 Education is central to suicide prevention. FutureLearn incorporates mental health awareness into its course content, particularly in courses that cover public health and psychology. Collaborating with mental health experts, FutureLearn:

- Develops and promotes short courses and microcredentials focusing on mental health literacy, resilience, and coping strategies for students and staff to complete.
- Includes content warnings and mental health disclaimers where sensitive topics (e.g. trauma, loss, depression) are discussed.

6.0 Learner Support

6.1 FutureLearn is built on the premise of social learning and creates a safe space for students to acquire and assess their knowledge and skills. To ensure the learning environment remains a safe space:

- Lecturers report any signs of distress through disclosure or observation, such as expressions of hopelessness, self-harm, or suicidal ideation which come to their attention.
- Students can report concerning content to their lecturers or a student support team member. These reports are reviewed promptly by the academic and content developers.

- Where necessary, student support teams may reach out to individuals privately with supportive messages and referral to appropriate resources.

7.0 Prevention, Intervention and Postvention

7.1 Prevention attempts to stop students from planning a suicide or to attempt it. FutureLearn aims to take an organisation-wide approach to support good mental health through the following:

- It has built a community amongst students and staff. Students can access their Student Hub, whereby they can communicate in an informal manner with academic teams and their peers.
- Students are encouraged to disclose any difficulties or distress to their lecturers or student support officers.
- Student support services are familiar with each partner university's wellbeing support services and refer students to these resources for additional help where appropriate.
- Support and academic teams publicise available support at student inductions.
- Providing awareness training on suicide prevention to relevant staff members.
- Ensuring robust policies are in place to prevent discrimination and harassment.

7.2 Intervention recognises signs of vulnerability. FutureLearn addresses interventions by:

- Splitting student support services into two sections, the first section being front-facing student support whereby students can easily access support and disclose difficulties to the student support team. Secondly, student services whereby the support team members provide phased reach-outs to non-engaging students helping with signposting to wellbeing services, extenuating circumstances, and abeyance.
- Keeping suicide awareness on the agenda at team meetings across the registry and academic teams.

7.3 FutureLearn is prepared for the unfortunate event of **postvention**. The death of a student in any circumstance is tragic including through suicide. FutureLearn has the following strategy in place to deal with a death by suicide when linked to FutureLearn:

- Bereaved next of kin will be contacted to offer support by the Director of Academic Affairs.
- Students and staff affected will be supported by student support team officers and Global University Systems (GUS) Human Resource Department, Funke Sadare FCIPD funke.sadare@gus.global.
- Students will be signposted to partner university wellbeing services and where needed the [Samaritans](#).
- Staff will be signposted to [Mind](#) or the [Samaritans](#).
- Internal and external communications will be planned and communicated by the Director of HR (GUS), Funke Sadare FCIPD funke.sadare@gus.global.
- Any media requests will be dealt with by the Managing Director, Ian Howell ian.howell@futurelearn.com.

8.0 Monitoring

8.1 The Director of HR (GUS) and Director of Academic Affairs monitors this policy annually and reports any concerns to the Academic Standards and Quality Committee.