MLI Student Wellbeing Policy and Procedures

Malta Leadership Institute

Version 1.0

2026

Dated Created	31 August 2026
Date updated:	—
Version:	1.0
Applicable to:	All MLI students; MLI academic, administrative and support staff
Author:	Malta Leadership Institute
Location:	MLI, Birkirkara

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Document Control 3
3. The Fundamental Principle of the Policy 3
4. Policy Overview 3
4.1. Policy Purpose 3
4.2. Policy Scope 4
4.3. Policy Key Principles 4
4.4. Roles and Responsibilities 4
4.5. Policy Review and Updates 5
5. Procedures 5
5.1. Accessing Wellbeing Support 5
5.2. Initial Discussion and Triage 5
5.3. Counselling Referral 6
5.4. Other Professional Referral Routes 6
5.5. Academic Support and Temporary Measures 6
5.6. Urgent Risk and Safeguarding 6
5.7. Regulated Programmes and Clinical Practice 7
5.8. Return to Study Following Significant Difficulty or Absence 7
5.9. Procedures for Tutors/Lecturers 7
5.10. Procedures for MLI Administrative and Support Staff 7
5.11. Confidentiality, Data Protection and Records 8
5.12. Review, Feedback and Complaints 8
6. Related Frameworks and Documents 8
Appendix 1: Referral workflow chart 9

1. Introduction

Malta Leadership Institute (MLI) recognises that student wellbeing is an important part of successful participation in further and higher education. Students may experience academic pressure, personal difficulties, emotional distress, financial or family concerns, adjustment to a new country or learning environment, or other circumstances that affect their ability to study effectively.

This policy establishes a clear and proportionate framework for early support, signposting and referral. It is intended to replace reliance on informal or ad hoc arrangements with a documented process that students and staff can understand and use. MLI provides initial guidance and educational support but is not a clinical mental-health service. Where professional assessment or therapy is required, the student will be referred to an appropriately qualified external professional or service.

2. Document Control

Version	Section Responsibility	Authorisation	Date
1.0	Whole document	Pending formal approval	31 August 2026
—	Future amendments	MLI designated approving body	—

3. The Fundamental Principle of the Policy

The fundamental principle is that students should be able to seek help early, in a respectful and confidential environment, without fear that asking for support will in itself disadvantage their academic standing. Support will be proportionate to the student's needs and will respect personal choice, professional boundaries, confidentiality, equality and safeguarding responsibilities.

Where a wellbeing concern may affect safe participation in a regulated programme, laboratory, workshop or clinical placement, MLI will balance student support with the safety of the student, patients, clients, children. service users, colleagues and the public. A health or wellbeing difficulty will not automatically be treated as a Fitness to Practise concern; the relevant issue is whether there is a material safety or professional risk that requires additional assessment or management. This will only be determined following an appropriate assessment.

4. Policy Overview

4.1. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent system through which MLI can:

- provide a clear first point of contact for students experiencing wellbeing difficulties;
- distinguish between administrative, academic, pastoral and professional support needs;
- offer timely signposting and referral to appropriate external professionals where required;

- make counselling available through associated independent counsellors at a preferential student rate, while preserving the student's right to choose private support;
- respond appropriately to urgent risk, safeguarding concerns and situations that may affect safe study or clinical practice; and
- maintain appropriate records (referral (template), plan, closure) and review the effectiveness of student-support arrangements through MLI's quality-assurance processes.

4.2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all students registered with MLI, whether studying face-to-face, online, blended, on placement or in another approved learning setting. It also applies to MLI staff, tutors and lecturers who receive a wellbeing disclosure or identify a concern in the course of their work.

This policy does not replace emergency medical care, specialist mental-health services, safeguarding procedures, Occupational Health assessment or Fitness to Practise procedures. Where one of those processes is more appropriate, the student will be referred or the matter escalated accordingly.

4.3. Policy Key Principles

- Support should be accessible, respectful, timely and student-centred.
- Students are encouraged to seek help at an early stage and may self-refer without first approaching a lecturer.
- Seeking counselling or wellbeing support will not, by itself, result in academic disadvantage or a Fitness to Practise referral.
- Students retain freedom of choice over whether to use an MLI-associated counsellor or an independent private professional.
- MLI staff will not diagnose mental-health conditions or provide therapy unless professionally qualified and specifically appointed to do so.
- Confidential information will be shared only where necessary, with consent where appropriate, or where there is a lawful or safeguarding reason to disclose.
- Where urgent risk to life or serious harm is identified, safety takes priority and emergency or safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- Support arrangements will be reviewed where the student's circumstances change or where the issue has a continuing effect on study or placement.

4.4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Main responsibility
Students	Seek support when needed, provide relevant information, engage with agreed support/referral arrangements, and notify the Support and Wellbeing officer if circumstances materially affect study or placement.
Support and Wellbeing Officer	Receives referrals, conducts an initial support discussion, signposts services, coordinates follow-up and keeps appropriate confidential records.
Programme Coordinator	Addresses academic implications, coordinates appropriate programme support and refers safety or professional concerns through the correct procedure.

Role	Main responsibility
Tutors/Lecturers	Provide reasonable academic/pastoral guidance within their role, identify concerns, maintain boundaries and refer students to the appropriate support route.
MLI Administrative Staff	Provide information, signposting and practical administrative support while respecting confidentiality.
Associated Counsellors	Provide independent professional counselling under their own professional obligations. Their clinical relationship is with the student, not with MLI.

4.5. Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years and earlier where required by changes in legislation, regulatory requirements, student feedback, safeguarding practice, service availability or significant institutional learning. The review will be coordinated through MLI's quality-assurance arrangements.

5. Procedures

5.1. Accessing Wellbeing Support

Students may request wellbeing support at any stage of their studies. They may contact the designated Support and Wellbeing Officer directly, speak to the Programme Coordinator, approach a lecturer or contact MLI administration and ask to be referred. A student does not have to disclose detailed personal information to administrative staff in order to request contact with the appropriate support person.

1. The request or concern is acknowledged and directed to the designated support contact within 2 working days.

2. An initial confidential discussion between the Admin Manager, the Support and Wellbeing Officer and the Programme Coordinator is arranged with 2 weeks from referral.

3. The student's immediate needs, level of urgency and preferred form of support are discussed.

4. Where appropriate, an agreed referral or support plan is recorded and follow-up by the Support and Wellbeing Officer is arranged according to the plan.

5. If the matter is urgent or raises safeguarding or serious safety concerns, the escalation procedure in section 5.6 is followed without delay.

5.2. Initial Discussion and Triage

The purpose of the initial discussion is not to diagnose the student. It is to understand the main difficulty and determine the most appropriate pathway. The concern may primarily require administrative assistance, academic support, additional-needs arrangements, counselling, medical or psychological assessment, Occupational Health input, safeguarding action or another external service.

Where the student's difficulty is within normal academic or administrative support, MLI may address it directly. Where specialist or therapeutic support is indicated, the student will be signposted or referred to an appropriately qualified professional.

5.3. Counselling Referral

MLI will maintain referral arrangements with one or more appropriately qualified independent counsellors. Where such arrangements are available, MLI students may access counselling at a preferential rate agreed between MLI and the associated counsellor, subject to the counsellor's availability and professional terms.

- Use of an associated counsellor is voluntary. Students remain free to choose their own private counsellor, psychologist, psychotherapist or other suitable professional.
- Unless MLI has expressly agreed otherwise in a particular case, counselling fees are paid by the student directly to the counsellor or chosen professional.
- The counsellor determines the clinical approach, frequency and duration of counselling in accordance with professional judgement and the student's agreement.
- MLI will not routinely receive counselling notes, diagnoses or details of sessions. The fact that counselling is taking place will only be recorded by MLI to the extent necessary for referral, support coordination or agreed academic arrangements.
- Information may be shared with MLI only with the student's consent, except where the counsellor has a professional or legal duty to act because of serious risk or safeguarding concerns.

5.4. Other Professional Referral Routes

Depending on the nature of the concern, MLI may signpost or refer the student to an appropriate external service, including a general practitioner, psychologist, psychiatrist, psychotherapist, social worker, specialist support service, Occupational Health provider or statutory safeguarding service. Students may also choose their own private professional.

MLI staff should not present a referral as a diagnosis. Where a professional report is later required for reasonable adjustments, Fitness to Practise, Occupational Health or another formal process, the relevant policy will determine what evidence is required and how it is handled.

5.5. Academic Support and Temporary Measures

Where a wellbeing difficulty is affecting study, the Programme Coordinator may discuss proportionate short-term academic support within existing academic regulations. This may include study planning, additional academic guidance, a temporary adjustment to the timing or organisation of learning activities, or referral under the MLI Additional Needs Policy and Procedures where a longer-term or disability-related adjustment may be appropriate.

Any change affecting an assessment must preserve the approved learning outcomes, academic standards and assessment integrity. Staff should not make informal assessment concessions outside approved procedures.

5.6. Urgent Risk and Safeguarding

Where information suggests an immediate or serious risk of harm to the student or another person, MLI will not rely on routine referral arrangements. Emergency services or an appropriate urgent professional service will be contacted where necessary. In Malta, the first assistance can be offered by the Mental Health Helpline 24/7 by calling 1579 or the emergency number is 112.

Where the concern involves abuse, neglect, exploitation, harassment, sexual misconduct or another safeguarding matter, it will be referred through MLI's safeguarding arrangements and,

where required, to the appropriate statutory authority. Confidentiality may be limited where disclosure is necessary to protect the student or another person from serious harm or to comply with a legal obligation.

5.7. Regulated Programmes and Clinical Practice

For students on programmes involving clinical practice or another safety-critical placement, a wellbeing concern may sometimes require Occupational Health advice or a temporary adjustment to placement arrangements. This is particularly relevant where the student's current circumstances may affect their ability to practise safely.

For the BSc Nursing programme, where a concern may materially affect patient safety or professional practice, the Programme Coordinator may refer the student to Occupational Health and, where appropriate, the Good Health, Good Character and Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures. The existence of a mental-health or wellbeing difficulty will not in itself amount to unfitness to practise.

5.8. Return to Study Following Significant Difficulty or Absence

Where a student returns following a significant wellbeing-related absence or interruption, MLI may agree a short return-to-study plan with the student. Depending on need, this may include a review meeting, academic catch-up arrangements, referral to Additional Needs support, phased return to practical activity, or Occupational Health clearance before return to a clinical or safety-critical environment.

5.9. Procedures for Tutors/Lecturers

- Listen respectfully and establish whether the student is seeking academic guidance, wellbeing support or urgent assistance.
- Do not attempt to diagnose, counsel beyond professional competence, or promise absolute confidentiality.
- Explain the available referral route and, where appropriate, help the student contact the designated Student Support/Wellbeing Contact.
- Escalate immediately where there is a serious or imminent risk of harm or a safeguarding concern.
- Record only information necessary for the educational or safeguarding purpose and avoid keeping detailed personal notes outside approved systems.
- Where the difficulty is affecting assessment or placement, refer the matter through the appropriate academic, Additional Needs, Occupational Health or Fitness to Practise procedure rather than making an informal concession.

5.10. Procedures for MLI Administrative and Support Staff

- Provide students with clear information on how to access the wellbeing-support route.
- Avoid requesting unnecessary personal or medical details when a student is simply asking to be referred.
- Pass the request promptly to the designated person and mark sensitive communications appropriately.
- Maintain a current list of associated counsellors and other approved referral contacts.

- Where an associated counsellor offers a preferential student rate, communicate the current rate or arrangement transparently and make clear that the student may choose private support instead.
- Keep referral and case-management records securely and restrict access to staff with a legitimate need to know.

5.11. Confidentiality, Data Protection and Records

Wellbeing information is sensitive personal information and will be handled in accordance with applicable data-protection requirements and MLI's data-protection arrangements. MLI will collect only information necessary to provide or coordinate support, manage risk or meet a legal or regulatory responsibility.

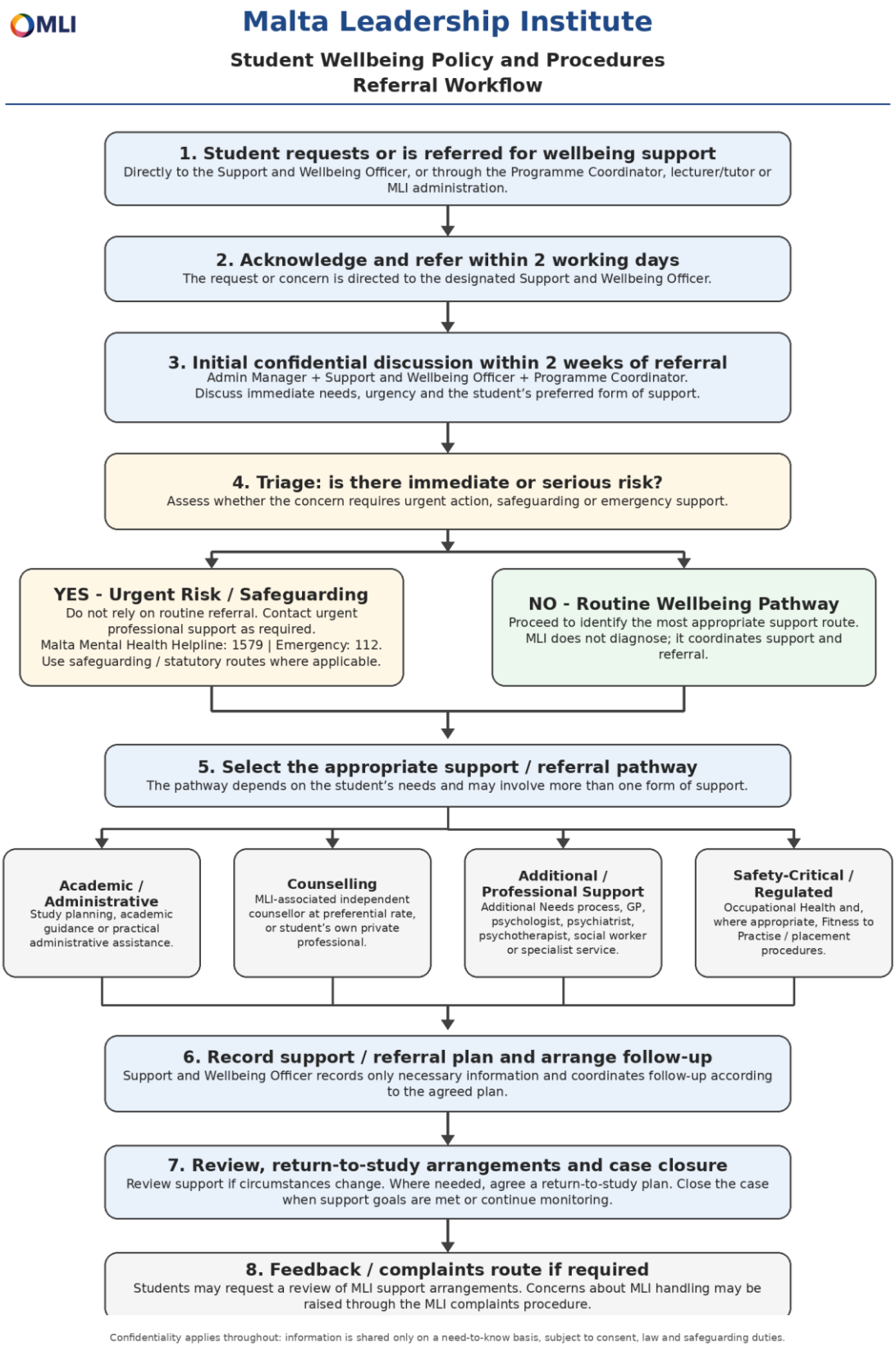
Counselling or specialist clinical records remain with the external professional. MLI will not normally request or retain detailed therapy notes. Where information must be shared internally, it will be limited to what the recipient needs in order to implement agreed support or manage a specific risk.

Records pertaining to additional needs such as psychologist's/counsellor's reports and similar reports shall be kept for a maximum of 1 year after graduation or completion of programme.

5.12. Review, Feedback and Complaints

Students may ask for their MLI support arrangements to be reviewed if their circumstances change or if they believe the arrangements are not meeting the agreed need. Concerns about the conduct of an external counsellor or clinician should normally be raised with that provider and, where applicable, the relevant professional body. Concerns about MLI's handling of a referral or support arrangement may be raised through MLI's complaints procedure.

6. Related Frameworks and Documents

- MFHEA National Quality Assurance Framework and Internal Quality Assurance requirements on appropriate learning resources and student support.
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and Malta Data Protection Act (Cap. 586).
- MLI Additional Needs Policy and Procedures.
- MLI Good Health, Good Character and Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures for the BSc Nursing programme.
- Applicable MLI safeguarding, complaints, academic regulations and data-protection procedures.
- Council for Nurses and Midwives Malta Standards for Educational Institutions Offering Programmes of Studies in Nursing Leading to Professional Registration as a Nurse, where applicable to nursing students.

Appendix 1: Referral workflow chart