



Training and consultancy  
tailored for the higher education sector

# Our training courses

2024 / 2025

# Contents

<b>How we approach training</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Modes of delivery</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our flagship courses</b>	
'Managing distressed students'	<b>6</b>
'Practical coaching skills for fostering students' self-reliance and independence'	<b>7</b>
'Balancing compassion with boundaries when working with students'	<b>8</b>
'Fitness to Study panel training – for chairs and panel members'	<b>9</b>
'Coordinating actions and providing support following a student death'	<b>10</b>
'Liaising with a family following a student death'	<b>11</b>
'Looking after yourself'	<b>12</b>
<b>Forthcoming courses</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Our clients and testimonials</b>	<b>14</b>

## How we approach training

**The higher education sector is unlike any other. Training that does not take account of the unique working relationship between a university and its students, or the specific regulatory regime that governs the sector, can fall wide of the mark.**

We understand the pressures involved in working in higher education today - including rising demand for support from students, students presenting at higher levels of risk, and colleagues' increasingly complex interactions with other stakeholders, such as students' parents.

Our training tackles the 'thornier' end of student interactions and support, where situations are more complex and challenging. We cover topics such as how to best support a distressed student, approaches to managing serious student incident cases such as when a student dies, or participating as a chair or panel member in a Fitness to Study process.

As well as helping colleagues to develop key skills to respond effectively to these challenges, a common theme in our training is the importance of boundaries. For example, in situations where a student is in distress, we ensure colleagues do not feel pressured to act as (unqualified) mental health specialists and instead feel confident in defining, working within, and reinforcing the boundaries of their role – and know when they have done enough.

**Our training is focused on supporting colleagues who work in student-facing roles or manage these teams in higher education – whether in a university, accommodation provider, students' union, or any other context – to feel confident about important aspects of their work with and for students.**

The courses we deliver are practical, memorable and informed by best practice in their given area of focus. They have been developed by those with significant direct experience of these topics in higher education. This means the courses are relevant and tailored to our sector's needs and challenges.

All our trainers at Plinth House have significant experience as managers and practitioners in higher education. The content of our courses draws upon first-hand experience of the higher education sector, as well as experience in other sectors - including the NHS, local government and the field of equality and diversity.

Plinth House offers ready-to-run online training sessions, ticketed events online and in-person, and tailored training and development. We can deliver training in a wide range of modes, including face-to-face, online workshops and webinars, audio podcasts and eLearning packages.

## Flexibility according to your needs

Delivering training face-to-face has many advantages, especially when the training is designed to challenge people's ways of thinking and change behaviour. It often proves useful for encouraging participants to engage, reflect, and open-up.

In-person delivery can be tricky to roll out across a whole institution and difficult for colleagues working remotely or on shift patterns to attend. This is where online delivery or asynchronous formats can provide flexible and effective alternatives.

We deliver our training in a variety of formats according to the needs of teams and individuals in the organisation, including:

### Ready-to-run training



**The easiest way to book live online delivery of our flagship training sessions for your organisation.**

Using our availability calendar, simply select a date or time that works for your cohort, and we deliver the session live and online for up to 25 participants per session.

### On-demand training & eLearning



**Video, audio and interactive modules delivered directly to individual colleagues or via your organisation's learning and development platform.**

Our eLearning courses allow colleagues to learn at their own pace, at a time and place that suits them.

### Ticketed events



**Public online and in-person training on our most popular topics.**

We organise open sessions for the sector on several dates through the year and places can be easily booked for one or more participants through our website.

### Tailored training & development



**Delivered in-person or online, we offer courses with tailoring to the specific needs, processes and context of your organisation.**

We adapt our training content and materials to reflect institution-specific referral routes and create case studies that suit your contexts.





# Managing distressed students

**Online delivery:** ½ day

**In-person delivery:** up to 1 day



**Online ticketed event attendance:**

£70 + VAT per ticket

**Ready-to-run online training delivery:**

£995 + VAT for up to 25 participants

**In-person, tailored and eLearning delivery:**

Pricing on request

### About this course

When faced with a distressed student, it can be easy for colleagues to feel overwhelmed or take on too much. This course is relevant for those who directly interact with students. It helps colleagues to feel confident about responding to a distressed student in a boundaried, role-appropriate and effective way.

The course considers the nature of distress and the way in which a student might present. This is followed with an exploration of practical skills needed to best respond to a distressed student – whether in-person or in the context of remote working and study. A final section focuses on how to respond to a student who presents at a higher level of risk – such as a student who mentions suicide.

### Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will:

- Be familiar with the nature of distress and the way in which a student might present,
- Understand practical ways in which they can build a collaborative relationship with a distressed student, and respond confidently and effectively to their distress,
- Know how to set and maintain the boundaries of their role, and look after their own wellbeing during these interactions with students,
- Feel confident in knowing how to respond to a student who is presenting a high level of risk - for example, a student who mentions suicide.

### Who is this course for?

This course is relevant to teams and cohorts who work with students in higher education and who might find themselves responding to a student in distress. This course is aimed at staff who are not clinically trained or in a specialist mental health support role; it is focused on providing the majority of university staff with a clear, practical understanding of how to respond to a distressed student.

# Practical coaching skills for fostering students' self-reliance and independence

Online delivery: 2 hours

In-person delivery: up to ½ day



**Online ticketed event attendance:**

£55 + VAT per ticket

**Ready-to-run online training delivery:**

£895 + VAT for up to 25 participants

**In-person, tailored and eLearning delivery:**

Pricing on request

### About this course

We know, from our own experience, that it is more empowering if we can do things for ourselves. We also instinctively know that it is better, when we are working with a student, if we can help that student to rely on their own resources to solve a particular problem or address a particular issue, rather than us just swooping in and solving things for the student.

This practical course explores ways in which we can help students rely less on us and more on themselves - a really important life skill.

### Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will understand:

- What coaching is, how it differs from other types of work we might do to support a student, and why a coaching style can be so effective,
- The GROW coaching model and how to frame effective coaching questions,
- What coaching looks like in practice through the exploration of case studies.

### Who is this course for?

This course is relevant to teams and cohorts who work with students in higher education and who might find themselves providing a student with support. This includes academic colleagues such as personal tutors, module leaders and lecturers, and professional services practitioners such as disability advisers, welfare advisers, finance advisers or international student advisers. The course is also beneficial to those working in an enquiry service, front desk or helpdesk, and colleagues in accommodation, security and students' union teams.

# Balancing compassion with boundaries when working with students

Online delivery: 2.5 hours

In-person delivery: up to ½ day



**Online ticketed event attendance:**

£60 + VAT per ticket

**Ready-to-run online training delivery:**

£950 + VAT for up to 25 participants

**In-person, tailored and eLearning delivery:**

Pricing on request

### About this course

Colleagues can find themselves in one-to-one interactions with students that are challenging. These interactions can take many different forms and may arise when having a particularly tricky conversation with a student – for example, when talking to a student about their academic performance or delivering bad news. There may also be situations in which colleagues are working with a student who is frustrated, hostile, or very passive and not engaging with what is being said.

How do we show compassion in these interactions, while also setting and maintaining appropriate boundaries? This course provides an opportunity to explore these kinds of tricky situations and take away practical ways to respond effectively in these situations with a student.

### Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will understand:

- The kinds of interactions that can be, or can become, difficult in one-to-one work with students - such as a tricky conversation with a student about their academic performance or engagement, delivering bad news to a student, or working with a student who is hostile or aggressive.
- How to get the balance right in these interactions, by being supportive and engaged with the student while also maintaining appropriate boundaries and looking after our own wellbeing.
- The key practical skills for responding to different types of difficult interaction.

### Who is this course for?

This course is aimed particularly at colleagues in academic roles – including personal tutors, module tutors, programme and module leaders, and senior tutors. Colleagues in other areas, such as professional services colleagues, can also benefit given that many of the skills covered are relevant to all colleagues who work with students, even though the examples used in the course reflect more academic and course-related interactions with students.



### Fitness to Study panel training – for chairs and panel members

Online delivery: ½ day

In-person delivery: up to 1 day



Online ticketed event attendance:

£70 + VAT per ticket

Ready-to-run online training delivery:

£995 + VAT for up to 25 participants

In-person, tailored and eLearning delivery:

Pricing on request

#### About this course

Most higher education institutions have a process for convening a Fitness to Study panel (also known by other names, such as a 'Support for Study' panel). This is generally how more complex Fitness to Study cases are handled – involving convening a meeting of key people to consider the case and decide on an appropriate outcome. The role of chairing or being a member of one of these panels can be daunting, given that the stakes can seem high for the student concerned and because Fitness to Study cases, by their very nature, are often complex and high-risk. Being on a panel like this can also be a part of our role that we are asked to take on without any specialist training.

Panel meetings can also give rise to a range of challenging scenarios. What should we do if a student turns up for a panel meeting with a lawyer? How should we respond if a student, who is expected to attend a panel meeting, does not turn up on the day? What should we do if we receive unclear or overly simplistic medical evidence about a student's fitness to continue on their programme? When should we allow an appeal against a panel decision? This course explores these scenarios and takes colleagues through, step-by-step, the different stages of running a Fitness to Study panel meeting – from the initial preparation and evidence gathering stages, including inviting the student to the panel meeting, through to ensuring the smooth running of the panel meeting on the day.

#### Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will understand:

- What we are seeking to achieve with a Fitness to Study panel,
- Who should be involved in the process, and how to plan and prepare for a panel meeting,
- Practical ways to respond to challenging scenarios that might arise during the panel meeting.

#### Who is this course for?

This course is relevant to anyone who may be asked to chair or be a member of a Fitness to Study panel, such as senior faculty colleagues, directors/managers of student services teams, university secretaries, registrars or other senior/executive level managers, or student services practitioners.

# Coordinating actions and providing support following a student death

Online delivery: ½ day

In-person delivery: up to 1 day



**Online ticketed event attendance:**

£70 + VAT per ticket

**Ready-to-run online training delivery:**

£995 + VAT for up to 25 participants

**In-person, tailored and eLearning delivery:**

Pricing on request

### About this course

All universities need to have clear procedures in place for responding to the death of a student, to make sure support is offered, in a timely and effective way, to those who need it. It is also important that everyone knows who is doing what, to prevent any duplication of action or any avoidable distress that could inadvertently arise through a lack of coordination.

This course explores the key aspects of a university's response to a student death – from how we can best support students during the first few hours following a death through to how we provide longer-term support for everyone who needs it, including the student's family and other students affected. The training has a focus on key skills that colleagues can take away to use in their respective roles. The course offers a space to ask questions and explore some of the trickier aspects of student death cases, as well as exploring how colleagues can look after themselves and support one another during the response.

### Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will understand:

- The context in which this work is carried out within universities – including the impact of media interest and social media, and recent national guidance for universities,
- The main features of an effective student death policy/procedure,
- Key aspects of making initial contact with the family of a student who has died,
- Practical skills and strategies for coordinating and providing support to students – including responding effectively in the first few hours following a student death on campus, delivering bad news to students, drafting sensitive communications to student cohorts, and having effective one-to-one conversations with students.

### Who is this course for?

This course is relevant to colleagues who might find themselves having a role to play in responding to a student death, including professional service managers and practitioners, faculty heads and registrars, senior tutors, accommodation staff, chaplains, communications/PR managers and security managers.

# Liaising with a family following a student death

Online delivery: ½ day

In-person delivery: up to 1 day



**Online ticketed event attendance:**

£70 + VAT per ticket

**Ready-to-run online training delivery:**

£995 + VAT for up to 25 participants

**In-person, tailored and eLearning delivery:**

Pricing on request

### About this course

This course focuses on the whole process of family liaison following a student death - from making the first telephone call to the family through to meeting the family in person and providing the family with longer-term support.

It is not easy to support a family, on behalf of your university or institution, at what is inevitably an incredibly difficult time for the family. It's made more difficult by the fact that this kind of family liaison work might not be a part of the role a colleague has been trained to carry out, and it might be something that, thankfully, does not happen frequently enough for us to quickly build up a depth of experience at handling these situations.

This course is designed to increase confidence about every aspect of family liaison. The training is interactive and practical, with a focus on key skills that we can take away to use in our respective roles. The event is also an important chance to ask questions and explore trickier aspects of family liaison.

### Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will understand:

- The contextual challenges in which this family liaison work takes place and what a family is needing from us,
- Effective ways to manage the initial phone call to the family, and manage practicalities associated with face-to-face meetings with a family,
- The importance of issues relating to community, faith, identity and ritual in conversations with a family, and the key aspects of longer-term liaison with a family.

### Who is this course for?

This course is relevant to colleagues whose role involves being a family's point of contact following a student death, such as student services team directors, managers and practitioners, senior faculty and academic colleagues, chaplains, and accommodation managers.

### Looking after yourself

Online delivery: 2.5 hours

In-person delivery: up to ½ day



Online ticketed event attendance:	£55 + VAT per ticket
Ready-to-run online training delivery:	£895 + VAT for up to 25 participants
In-person, tailored and eLearning delivery:	Pricing on request

#### About this course

In our busy roles in higher education, it is important to take some time to reflect on how we look after our own wellbeing. How can we think through the different things that are causing us stress? How can we leave work at work, and switch off when we get home? This course shares practical ways in which we can look after ourselves, both in the moment and longer term. It considers the differences between stress and burnout and provides participants with four complementary approaches to managing their wellbeing. These approaches explore factors that influence our current state of mind, and provide a set of practical steps that can be adopted in our day-to-day activities to allow us to draw on our inner resources and activate change.

#### Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will understand:

- The differences between stress and burnout, and recognise their resilience,
- How to plan actions to support their wellbeing, by considering four complementary approaches,
- A range of practical techniques to help their understanding of sources of their stress, to be focused and effective, and foster curiosity and value in their daily activities,
- How to gain a foundation on which to activate change.

#### Who is this course for?

This course is relevant to everyone who works in higher education and similar educational settings.

### Forthcoming courses for 2025/26

We are developing new courses for 2025/26:

- **Equality, diversity and tolerance** in higher education, using a new approach based on **combining equality with freedom of speech and diversity of thought**,
- Training for those responsible for **coordinating responses to serious student incidents**
- Revised versions of our one-day and two-day **Safeguarding courses for university designated safeguarding leads**.





## Our clients and testimonials

We have worked with over 75 organisations and institutions in the higher education sector, and we welcome over 1,000 colleagues to our training sessions each year.

Here are some of their comments on our courses and their delivery:

“Brilliant training and presenter”

“Useful tips and advice that can be practically implemented”

“The trainer was brilliant and presented the information and models in a really engaging and clear way”

“Knowledge and experience in student services is evident in the examples used throughout - really helpful”

“The role play recordings were good because they related to things I help students with every day”

“Engaging, thought-provoking”

“The discussions around the case studies were really informative and valuable”

“It was super informative and very educational - enjoyed the format”

“Very useful session, I found the conversations valuable and pertinent. It is one of the most useful courses I have taken in a while!”

“I really appreciated the breadth of experience shared alongside the policies and regulatory background”

“Presenter was warm and engaging”

“Really engaging, and in the world of online training these days it was sensitively delivered. Thank you, some great advice along with theory.”

“Thank you for hosting and facilitating the event! It was very insightful and felt I learnt a lot today”

“Well delivered and paced”

“Very practical. Trainer clearly had extensive experience but always listened and never patronised”

“A fantastic trainer. Very clear in delivery and also facilitated discussion.”

“Great course, I'm really glad to have been a part of it.”

“Very informative, supportive and insightful, thank you.”

“Thank you very much, great course, really relevant to my role and very engaging”

“The trainer created a good environment to share and learn”

# Our clients and testimonials

The HEIs and higher education sector organisations we have supported include:

**ROYAL CENTRAL**  
SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

  
**Royal College of Art**

 **University of Sunderland**

**US**  
UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

**STUDENT ROOST**

 **University of Exeter**

*University of*  
**Huddersfield**  
Inspiring global professionals

**KING'S**  
*College*  
**LONDON**

  
UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

 **Queen Mary**  
University of London

 **Abertay University**

 **ahep**  
Association of Higher Education Professionals

 **DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY LEICESTER**

 **Durham University**

**FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY**

 **Swansea University**  
Prifysgol Abertawe

 **UMHAN**  
University Mental Health Adversity Network

**UNITE STUDENTS**

 UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

Est. 1841 | **YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY**

EST 1892 **LSBU**

 **Newcastle University**

 **University of BRISTOL**

 **University of Bedfordshire**

**Lancaster University** 

 **LONDON FILM ACADEMY**

**CITY**  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON  
EST 1894

**IMPERIAL**

**BSU**

 **UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH**

