

# THREAT ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL



## THREAT ASSESSMENT

**Contact Officer**

*Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) and Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration)*

### Definitions

**Threat:** A threat is defined as any behaviour that is perceived as concerning, disruptive or threatening.

**Threat Assessment Protocol:** A set of operational activities that uses a fact-finding process in order to identify, assess, and manage situations in which there may be a threat or risk to a student, other people, or property. The primary focus of the protocol is to assess potentially threatening situations identified by the members of the community and to develop risk abatement plans that minimize the potential risk of harm.

**Threat Assessment Team (TAT):** The inter-disciplinary body to which situations of concern to members of the university community (because they, for example, present a possible safety risk, are disruptive, or are potentially threatening) are referred to determine an appropriate course of action. A TAT Coordinator oversees and coordinates the work of the TAT.

**TAT Members:** TAT members will include all, or a subset, of the following, as may be appropriate to the specific circumstances under consideration: Vice-Provost and Dean of Student Affairs or designate, University Counsel (or designate), Director of Campus Security and Emergency Services (CSES) or designate, Director Counselling Services (or designate), Director of Environmental Health and Safety or designate, Director, Risk Management and Office of the Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration), a representative from the Office of the Provost and, as required, a member of Human Resources (when a staff member is involved), a member of Faculty Relations (when a faculty member is involved), representatives from other units/departments as appropriate (e.g. Faculties and Schools, Residence Life, Human Rights Office).

**Students at Risk:** Students who engage in one or more of the following behaviours are referred to as Students at Risk:

- Behaviour that gives rise to reasonable concerns about a threat or risk to

- themselves, other people, or property;
- Behaviour that causes significant disruption to, or interference with the educational process, or interferes significantly with the lawful and proper activities or functions of Queen's University, its staff, and/or members of the university community due to issues that may pertain to their mental or physical health; or
- Behaviour that suggests an inability or unwillingness to manage serious health condition(s), even with accommodation(s) if required, resulting in the student's inability to engage in basic activities required to function in a university setting, or, failure to cooperate with the university's reasonable efforts to evaluate such health condition(s), resulting in the student's inability to engage in basic activities required to function in a university setting.

**Students at Risk Policy:** The Students at Risk Policy guides the university response (detailed in the Students at Risk Procedure) to students who are identified as being potentially at risk. The policy and procedure outline the processes to be followed from initial identification up to, and including, a student's return to campus after either a voluntary withdrawal or temporary suspension. The policy and procedure are designed to manage situations that may span several months, and may see a student stepping in and out of their academic life. Not all students at risk represent a threat. Situations that represent a perceived threat will be referred, in the first instance, to the TAT process.

**Assessment and Care Team (ACT):** A sub-group of TAT and the body to which situations involving students potentially at risk, but who are not deemed to be an immediate threat to themselves or others, are referred to determine an appropriate course of action. In certain circumstances, student behaviour of concern (because they, for example, present a possible safety risk, are disruptive or are potentially threatening) may be directed to the TAT process before being referred to ACT and the Students at Risk Procedure.

**ACT Members:** Vice-Provost and Dean of Student Affairs (or designate) serves as the ACT coordinator. ACT members will also include all, or a subset, of the following, as may be appropriate to the specific circumstances under consideration: Director, Counselling Services or designate, Director, CSES or designate, a representative from the student's home faculty/school and may include representatives from other units/departments as appropriate (e.g. University Legal Counsel, Residence Life, Human Rights Office).

### Purpose

Queen's University is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and welcoming environment in which all members of the community may live, work, and study. The university also has the right and the responsibility to protect the interests and safety of all members of the university community. Recognizing that threats or acts of violence on campus are relatively rare, in limited and exceptional circumstances the university may be required to rapidly and effectively respond to emerging or urgent situations. Should this occur, the

Threat Assessment Protocol outlines the university process for identifying, assessing, reporting and managing concerning behaviours.

### **Guiding Principles**

Threat Assessment and Response Coordination will involve the following three facets of dealing with risk situations:

- **Prevention and Preparation;**
- **Intervention;** and
- **Follow up.**

**Prevention and Preparation** processes include educating the community about risk factors (worrisome behaviours) and facilitation of reporting situations of concern that are disruptive, or are potentially threatening, and may present a possible safety risk. This involves the development of a reporting procedure which is easily implemented and well publicized to community members. Communication regarding the reporting procedure represents 'fair notice' to students, staff and faculty of the existence of the Threat Assessment Protocol and the Student At Risk Policy and Procedure, and the collection and use of personal information that will occur within these processes in response to perceived risk.

**Intervention** uses a fact-finding process to identify, assess and manage potentially threatening situations in which there may be a threat or risk to a student, other people, or property. These procedures include responding rapidly to reports of worrisome behaviours, fact-finding (from witnesses, others with specific knowledge), development of a risk abatement plan, and execution of the plan.

**Follow up** involves processes which are developed after an incident has occurred or where a perceived threat has created an element of concern among some members of the community, and includes debriefing by team members, the provision of appropriate support to those needing it, and administrative review and follow up.

### **Scope**

This Threat Assessment Protocol applies to all faculty, staff, students and visitors to Queen's University.

### **Role of the Coordinator**

The TAT coordinator is responsible for the overall coordination of the TAT process. The coordinator (or designate) convenes meetings, manages internal communication, maintains records and follows-up on decisions of the team as required. The coordinator is also responsible for ensuring all TAT members are aware of and respect confidentiality and privacy legislation and resulting processes, including with respect to information sharing and document handling. The TAT coordinator will be appointed by the *Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) and Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration)*

## **Reporting Disruptive, Threatening or Violent Conduct**

Members of the university community who are faced with an immediate, grave, risk or threatening situation that requires external intervention (e.g., an armed intruder) should call **911** and an immediate response will be coordinated by CSES and/or the Kingston Police.

Following the initial response, the TAT will be called and may meet as necessary to discuss possible next steps, including how to reduce any further risk to an individual and/or the campus, and to arrange any on-going care or support for members of the campus community involved with the situation.

For situations of concern involving disruptive, threatening, or worrisome behaviour, where there is reasonable cause to believe that the safety of persons may be threatened, CSES should be contacted immediately. CSES will take whatever immediate action is necessary to secure the safety of persons, and shall alert the TAT Coordinator regarding the incident. Once the immediate emergency has been addressed by CSES and or other authorities, the Threat Assessment process will be followed.

If there is no immediate emergency, but there is a reason to believe that there is potential for the safety of the community to be threatened or for disruption of the work or study environment, CSES should be alerted as soon as possible, including outside of normal business hours through the Emergency Report Centre at 613 533 6111.

For disruptive, threatening or violent conduct by a member of the university community that occurs outside university property (e.g., in student housing, a hospital, etc.), the TAT process will be invoked as required upon notification via CSES.

## **Procedure**

The following Threat Assessment Procedure sets out a framework for the TAT to interact and to rapidly and effectively identify, assess and coordinate responses to situations where a person associated with Queen's University may be at risk of harming themselves, other people or property.

## **Threat Assessment Procedure**

1. Threat is reported to Campus Security and Emergency Services (CSES).
2. CSES contacts the TAT Coordinator.
3. TAT Coordinator reviews immediate facts.
4. If warranted, coordinator calls TAT meeting.
5. TAT determines the level of threat and/or risk.

6. TAT develops appropriate response and implements (response may be phased depending on circumstances).
7. Closure and Follow-Up.

### **Criteria for Meeting in a Timely Manner**

Normally, within one working day of receiving a report about a person of concern, the TAT Coordinator will assess the risk level in consultation with the person making the report and others involved in the case as appropriate. Response to the situation is based on the level of threat, as outlined below.

The time frame for calling a TAT meeting will be determined by the threat level.

- Level 1: HIGH RISK/URGENT: to be reported to CSES immediately. Situations deemed to be very serious or which involve an imminent risk to the individual or to others, should be reported to the CSES immediately. For High Risk and Urgent concerns, the team will meet within twenty-four (24) hours.
- Level 2: EMERGENT CONCERN: to be directed to the CSES for response in a timely manner. For emergent concerns, the TAT Coordinator and CSES will determine whether consultation with the TAT is required. If it is determined that consultation is required, a TAT meeting will be convened to review the case and make recommendations on how to proceed. If it is determined that a TAT meeting is not required, the situation will be monitored and may be referred to a different procedure or office including Students at Risk, Student Wellness Services, Human Rights, Non-Academic Discipline or Human Resources.

This protocol does not prevent and should not delay a university official from taking appropriate and immediate actions to address emergency situations. Officials should first address the emergency situation, using established protocols, and then, if appropriate, refer the case to the appropriate process or office.

### **Assessment**

To identify the degree of risk that an individual may present to themselves or others, an effective data-gathering process will be initiated. This process is designed to form a comprehensive picture of the individual's pattern of behaviour across a range of situations. The result of this assessment is to place the individual of concern on a continuum of risk, from "very low" (i.e. little or no identifiable risk of violent behaviour) to "very high" (i.e. the individual represents a high and imminent risk of violence). The continuum of risk reflects the process of assessing the probability of occurrence of violence; it is not a behavioural prediction.

The continuum of risk will be paralleled by a continuum of response. Some risk situations will require a minimal response (i.e. the degree of risk appears to be low; can be established quickly and the intervention required is relatively low-level) while others will require more intensive investigation and assessment and may involve a higher level of response, including the involvement of law enforcement officials.

In certain circumstances, the ability to define the specific level of threat or risk may be beyond the expertise of the TAT, or resources available internally. In these circumstances, the person of concern may be required to undergo an assessment with specialists independent of the university as a condition of remaining on campus.

### **Response**

Once the assessment has been completed the TAT will develop a Response Plan appropriate to the situation and the level of threat. Depending on the circumstances and the information available several meetings may be required to develop a complete response. Possible responses include:

- ongoing monitoring of behaviour;
- referral to optional/voluntary support services i.e. counselling;
- referral for assessment;
- referral to a different procedure or office; i.e. Human Resources
- non-association/no contact directives;
- campus-wide Notice of Prohibition<sup>1</sup> or partial Notice of Prohibition; and
- conditions or restrictions on activities.

If a decision is made to impose any of these responses, the individual will be informed of this decision in writing.

Students shall be advised of the right to appeal the decision to the Chair of the University Student Appeal Board and the option to contact the Office of the University Ombudsman for information and advice. The decision under appeal, including any actions and/or preventative measures outlined in the decision, shall remain.

Depending on the situation there may be media interest or presence. Should this happen the coordinator will consult with University Communications regarding what information, if any, can be conveyed, to whom, and who the university spokesperson would be.

### **Referrals**

Following the initial review by TAT or on the recommendation of the coordinator a case may be referred to other offices or procedures including *Students at Risk*, *Human Rights*, *Non-*

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<sup>1</sup> A Notice of Prohibition is a notice to a particular individual that they have been prohibited from all or part of the campus of Queen's University.

*Academic Misconduct or Human Resources.* If necessary, a case can be referred back to TAT should the situation change and concerning behaviours re-emerge.

### **Students at Risk Policy**

The Students at Risk Policy is designed to guide the university response for students who are identified as being potentially at risk by outlining the process to be followed from initial identification up to, and including, a student's return to campus after either a voluntary withdrawal or a temporary suspension. For Students at Risk, the TAT may coordinate the immediate response to a perceived threat and once addressed, refer the case to the ACT to manage the on-going situation. These may span several months and may see a student stepping in and out of their academic life. Conversely if a case that may have initially been referred to the Student at Risk Process escalates it may be referred to the TAT.

### **Follow-Up and Closure**

After the initial assessment and intervention, the team will determine whether the case requires another meeting. The team will determine if the case is:

1. **Active:** There are still issues to address; further TAT meetings will be required to develop a complete response.
2. **Monitor:** A response has been developed that reduces the immediate threat but the situation is such that the threat could re-emerge. TAT will continue to monitor the situation.
3. **Closed:** the issue has either been referred to another process or there is nothing further to be done as the situation has been addressed and is unlikely to re-occur.

Once a case is closed the incident will be debriefed and appropriately documented.

### **Documentation and Reports**

A record of the activities specific to each case will be maintained by the TAT Coordinator, and communicated to the relevant parties in the university community (i.e. senior administration, as needed). The records will not be shared or used for any purpose not outlined in this document and retained in accordance with the university's record retention schedule.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

Reports developed and collected under this policy are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA, 1990), and the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), which regulate the collection, use and disclosure of personal information and personal health information respectively.

Information can be disclosed without consent, per FIPPA and PHIPA, in emergency or other urgent situations, and in these circumstances, will be disclosed on a need-to-know basis only. For example, where violence or threats are directed at or are likely to be directed to particular individuals or units, that information will be communicated to the individual or unit involved as well as to other appropriate authorities. Disclosure will occur per Information and Privacy Commissioner [fact sheets](#) and [practice tools](#) for universities.

The TAT Coordinators and the members of the TAT will only share the identity of the person who makes the report with the individual being reported if the reporter provides explicit permission to do so, or if required by law or university policies or collective agreements.