

Student Fitness to Practise Procedures

NB: This is not the full University Procedures

Student Fitness to Practise (SFTP) applies to all students undertaking a professional programme. Students and applicants are required to adhere/aspire to professional standards and the University's Code of Student Professional Conduct.

You are required to disclose all relevant information about your health and character and keep the University informed of any changes.

In an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Occupational Health (OH) clearance (for Social Work students also a suitability for social work check) you are required to provide full and accurate information. Any relevant information that subsequently comes to light may lead to a SFTP investigation.

It is your responsibility to consult with your Programme / Pathway Director if you become subject to any criminal proceedings as soon after the event as possible.

At any stage of the procedures, when attending meetings in person, you have the right to be accompanied.



Stages in Dealing with Allegations

Stage 0 identification or notification of a potential Fitness to Practise issue

Stage 1 information gathering stage

Stage 2 early resolution stage; separated into two routes – health and professional conduct

Stage 3 formal investigation stage (i.e. referral to the Fitness to Practise Panel)

Contact the Students' Union for support: www.ccsu.co.uk/ftp

The Advice Caseworker in the Students' Union can help you understand what is going on, they can help you to write any statements and attend any meetings with you. They can speak on your behalf if necessary. They have knowledge and experience of SFTP and they could be of value to you in representing your case. Plus, they are free!

Stage 0 – Issue

A potential fitness to practise issue is brought to the attention of the University. You could be neutrally withdraw from University and/or practice at any stage. (this has no bearing on the outcome of the case and any placement or university time that you miss you will be able to make up if appropriate).

Stage 1 **Information Gathering**

If the issue indicates that professional standards may have been breached, you will be referred to the appropriate Stage 2 route (there can be also a direct referral to Stage 3). You will be notified of the outcome of this Stage and, if proceeding to Stage 2, what route is being followed.

Stage 2 **Health Route**

This is for health issues that may impact on your practice. You will be invited to attend an Occupational Health (OH) screening. One of the following courses of action will be taken as a result:

- No further action needs to be taken
- Adjustments can be considered without further consultation
- Adjustments are proposed and require further consultation
 - If this is not possible then the case will be referred to Stage 3
- You are not cleared by OH. The university will discuss interruption/withdrawal options with you

Stage 2 Professional Conduct Route

One of the following determinations will be made:

- No further action needs to be taken
- You have breached professional standards but this can be resolved at this stage. Potential sanctions may include:
 - writing a reflection on the issue
 - writing a formal learning agreement
 - repeating a formative assessment of practice
 - joining a different University group
 - a written apology may be requested
- You have breached professional standards that cannot be resolved at this stage. The case will be referred to Stage 3

If you are unwilling to fulfil the sanctions the matter will automatically progress to Stage 3.

NB: this route also covers issues related to DBS and relevant Plagiarism & Academic Misconduct

Stage 3 Fitness to Practise Panel

If the matter cannot be resolved at an earlier stage you will be referred to the Student Fitness to Practise Panel. **The Panel will normally meet within 20 working days** and take place at whichever campus you are based.

The decision making Panel must always include a Chair, the Professional Lead and two other people, one of whom must be a registrant from the relevant Statutory Regulatory body. None of the decision making Panel will have any potential conflict of interest with the case.

The invitation to attend the Panel meeting will normally be sent at least ten working days before the meeting date. The written report with a timeline of events and pertinent evidence will be circulated to the Panel and to you in advance of the Panel meeting.

You have the right to **submit a written statement** before the Panel meeting; this must be sent to the Secretary **at least three working days before the meeting.** (Your representative can help you in writing this) It is strongly recommended that you prepare a written statement and also provide any relevant evidence.

You may be accompanied to the Panel by a representative. Contact the Students' Union for support: www.ccsu.co.uk/ftp.

You may not bring a legal representative to the Panel meeting. Your representative is entitled to speak at the Panel. The possible outcomes of the Panel hearing are as follows:

- **the case is not proven** you receive no warning or sanction
- **the case is proven (in part or in full)** the Panel then decides a sanction which may be:
 - You are required to write an apology
 - You receive a written warning
 - You are required to take remedial action
 - You are asked for evidence of improvement and reflection
 - You are required to retake part of the programme
 - You are suspended from the programme for a specified period of time
 - You are withdrawn from the programme, with the ability to re-register in the future
 - You are withdrawn from the programme, without the ability to re-register in the future but with possible transfer to another non-professional programme
 - You are excluded from the University
 - alternative sanctions may be made as appropriate to individual cases

THE RIGHT OF APPEAL

You will be informed of the right of appeal when the decision is communicated to you. The decision shall take effect and remain in force pending the outcome of any appeal.