



## Academic Guides

# Fitness to Practise Guide

### How this guide helps

Our Student Fitness to Practise Guide directs you to the regulations, provides a summary of the process and helps you engage with the Fitness to Practise investigation either with Adviser support, independently or with an alternate supporter.

As set out in our guide to [accessing help remotely](#) – you can access key information and resources immediately. The information and resources in the guide below may either answer your questions or help give them a further focus.

### Using the guide for information (directed help without an Adviser)

This 5-step guide helps you throughout the process whether you decide to go ahead independently, have another supporter or where we have limited availability.

### Getting Adviser support

After reading this guide in full- details of how to access free, independent and confidential advice can be found in the section *Further Guidance*.

### If you feel anxious

While the clear focus of our service is helping you practically, we recognise that you may experience feelings of stress and anxiety.

Recognise that it is normal and natural to feel some anxiety when you are in a formal process and/or having experienced circumstances potentially giving rise to a Fitness to Practise investigation.

Think about what you can control (e.g. preparing for meeting) and what you cannot (e.g. the judgement of the decision maker)

If overwhelmed by your feelings reach out to the relevant support services [here](#)

### Next Steps

#### Step 1: The regulations

Read the *Regulations Governing Fitness to Practise* in *The University Calendar* [here](#)



**Pay** attention to **what** your duties are as a student studying on a professional course, **what** concerns can trigger a Fitness to Practise investigation, and **where** you can seek help and support in the process.

**Note** the regulations also provide normal timescales of the process and list potential outcomes of both the investigation and a full Fitness to Practise Panel.

## Step 2: Summary of the process

The Fitness to Practise process consists of several stages. **Minor, or 'low-level'** concerns about conduct, health or behaviour are dealt with internally within the faculty, giving student support and an opportunity to improve prior to formal steps. For more serious concerns, or if there is no improvement despite support, a more formal procedure may commence. When the **formal process** is initiated, an **investigator** will be nominated to decide whether your Fitness to Practise may be impaired. If the investigator finds your Fitness to Practise may be impaired your case will be referred to the chair of the **Fitness to Practise Panel** (for lower level concerns), or your case may be referred directly to the full Fitness to Practise Panel. The full Panel has authority to make the decision about your progression on the course, depending on the seriousness of the concerns raised. The final stage is a **Fitness to Practise Appeal**, which can be lodged by the student following the outcome of the full Fitness to Practise Panel if they have evidence supporting one or more of the relevant grounds.

You will find the details of all the stages in the Fitness to Practise regulations Section A Policy and the Section B Procedure [here](#).

## Step 3: Initial actions:

**Ensure** you have read the Fitness to Practise regulations, be **clear** on which stage of the Fitness to Practise process you are in, what the **timescales** for response are, as well as **where** to direct your response.

**Write** a statement. This may be helpful for any stage of the process, but particularly important for a Fitness to Practise Panel hearing, as it can be used as a 'script' for you to read at the meeting. . It is a good opportunity to reflect on what went wrong and the steps you took to improve. See our *Fitness to Practise Statements* guide for good tips.

**Prepare** for the meeting by reviewing the concerns, the Fitness to Practise regulations, any relevant guidance or codes of conduct written by the relevant professional body, practise reading your statement aloud to make sure you are familiar with the contents and the sound of your own voice.

## Step 4: Your Fitness to Practise meeting



## Support Advice Centre

If we are supporting you, you should **inform** us as soon as you have a date and time for your meeting

**Read** our guide to *Fitness to Practise Meetings*

**Submit** a copy of your student statement to the note taker within the correct timescales as described in the regulations

**Inform** the note taker if you wish your supporter to be included in the outcome of the meeting and receive a copy of the meeting notes.

### Step 5 After the Fitness to Practise Meeting

**Read** the section on *the outcomes and follow up actions* in our guide to *Fitness to Practise Meetings*.

### Further Guidance

As a student you have the right to seek independent advice and support regarding your Fitness to Practise investigation. Our Advisers can help you prepare and make the most of your opportunity to respond to the concerns. They can also support you at any Fitness to Practise meetings and guide you through the process.

To receive help and support, please follow the steps below:

- Email The Advice Centre at [advice@susu.org](mailto:advice@susu.org)
- Follow the guidance you will receive from us, including:
  - A)** Drafting your statement (see point above about statement writing);
  - B)** Send your statement and relevant documents to [advice@susu.org](mailto:advice@susu.org);
  - C)** You will receive a response from an Adviser, including feedback on your statement. If necessary, and at the discretion of the Adviser, they may arrange a video call to discuss the case with you;
  - D)** Once you have received feedback and guidance, submit your statement and any other relevant documentation to the University

For further guidance on the Regulations Governing Fitness to Practise, contact The Advice Centre. Tel: 02380 592 085 Email: [advice@susu.org](mailto:advice@susu.org)

### Disclaimer/Date Published/Date for Review

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