Fitness to Practise General Guide

How this guide helps

Our Student Fitness to Practise General 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 a companion.

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

This 3-step guide helps you throughout the process whether you decide to go ahead independently, have another companion 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 investigator or panel)

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, the concerns that may 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 the potential outcomes of an informal meeting, a Fitness to Practise 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: Fitness to Practise Meeting & Student Statements

Once you have read the Fitness to Practise regulations, be clear at which stage of the Fitness to Practise process you are.

Prepare for any upcoming meetings by reviewing any concerns raised, relevant guidance or codes of conduct written by the relevant professional body and reading our summary Fitness to Practise Meetings Guide.

Our summary Fitness to Practise Meetings Guide can be found here: Fitness to practice meeting guide

Read our Student Statements: Fitness to Practise Guide which can be found here [include link]. You will see why drafting a student statement early on is a key part of helping you manage this process as it:

- Helps you to focus on the key points you wish to make in any meetings
- Enables you to share key points with your companion /Adviser before the meeting
- Presents you with an opportunity to reflect on any concerns that have been raised

Sending a draft statement to advice@susu.org is the best way to prepare for your initial meeting with an Adviser and get the most from your appointment.

Alert us to the time and date of any upcoming Fitness to Practise meetings so we can arrange for you to be supported by an Adviser.

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
- 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;
  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

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