

Fitness to Practise Meetings

How this guide helps

The SUSU Advice Centre is committed to providing guidance to all students who are undergoing a Fitness to Practise investigation and providing direct Adviser support where possible.

This guide on Fitness to Practise meetings will help you to prepare for any meetings either with direct Adviser support, if you decide to take a 'companion' or decide to attend meetings unaccompanied.

This guide takes you through the steps to take if you do have a meeting in relation to your Fitness to Practise. Including: how to prepare, support during the meeting, and follow-up actions.

The guide covers what to do when supported by an Adviser, as well as taking part in a meeting without an Adviser present.

What is a Fitness to Practise meeting?

Depending on the stage of your Fitness to Practise case and the severity of concerns, this may include:

- An informal meeting with staff to discuss minor concerns,
- A meeting with a Fitness to Practise Investigator, or
- a full Fitness to Practise Panel hearing.

Any of the above meetings offer an opportunity for you to present a concise and clear summary of the circumstances, reflect on concerns raised, demonstrate lessons learnt and talk about steps you are taking to address those concerns.

In an **informal meeting** the concerns are likely to be of a lower level and aim to be resolved without a Fitness to Practise Investigation meeting or Fitness to Practise panel. It may be that in this meeting you agree an action plan, objectives, or decide steps that may be of help to you. While not part of a formal process it is a good idea to keep a copy of anything you have agreed to at this stage in case it becomes formal.

To help you prepare in writing for **formal meetings** that are part of the process read our guide: [Student Statements; fitness to practise](#)

Before a **Fitness to Practise Investigation** meeting you may wish to prepare a statement. Although primarily a meeting to establish the 'facts' to inform the investigators report many of the features of a student statement for a full panel meeting may be helpful. The outcome may be that the matter goes no further (Fitness to Practise not 'impaired'), goes directly to a panel (Fitness to Practise 'impaired'), goes to the Chair of the Fitness to Practise Panel either to impose conditions or call a full panel meeting (while 'impaired' a concern of a 'lower

level').

Written preparation for a full Fitness to Practise panel is advisable and it is sensible to read our statement writing guide in conjunction with some basic 'Dos' & 'Don'ts' as well as the suggested 'steps'.

Fitness to Practise Panel meetings - Dos & Don'ts

Do prepare (as this is what you can directly control)

Don't expect your Adviser to provide a prediction of the outcome

Do have a clear idea of the 4 or 5 key points you wish the Investigator or the Panel to understand

Don't think you must dress in formal clothing but consider wearing something smart

Do have a copy of your student statement, which you can use as your 'script' during the meeting

Don't pretend to know the answer if you cannot remember (don't be afraid to say 'I don't know' or 'I can't remember')

Do offer to get and submit further information or evidence after the meeting if information disclosed during the meeting reminded you of additional evidence you possess (Note: this may mean the meeting may be adjourned at the Chair's discretion).

Fitness to Practise Panel meetings – Attending

with an Adviser

Before the Meeting

Step 1 – Ensure that your Adviser has read and commented on your student statement and supporting documents (when you have been sent feedback you will be expected to send any redraft in a timely manner. Consult our guide Student Statements: Fitness to Practise.)

Step 2 – Give the time and date of any meeting and forward draft documents to advice@susu.org and/or your Adviser

Step 3 – Let the CQA team know that an Adviser will be supporting you in the meeting (requesting all practical arrangements for your Adviser to be included in video conferencing)

Step 4 – If there is an opportunity for a short pre-brief, your Adviser will explain how the meeting is likely to unfold, how you will be supported as well as answering any questions you may have.

The role of the adviser in the meeting

The role of the Adviser during the meeting includes:

- Supporting you to make your key points to the reviewer (including reading your student statement if you become nervous)

- Ensuring the policies and processes set out in the regulations are followed
- Taking time out to talk with you individually if required or requested

During & After the Meeting

At the meeting: if you want your Adviser to be included in any outcomes, please make the notetaker aware **or** update your Adviser when you receive the outcome.

Fitness to Practise Meeting – Attending without an Adviser

Step 1 – Make sure you have access to all our guides on Fitness to Practise including Student Statements: Fitness to Practise.

Step 2 – If there is time before the meeting - get feedback on your statement and relevant documents from an Adviser (by e-mailing advice@susu.org – staff will let you know Adviser capacity to feedback)

Step 3 – Be aware (If an Adviser is unavailable) that you can take a member of the University (usually a member of staff or fellow student), or another person to support you at the meeting. For details who the supporter can be, please see the Fitness to Practise regulations Section A, point 5.

Step 4 – Let the CQA team know who will be supporting you in the meeting (including providing all practical arrangements for video conferencing)

The role of a companion in the Meeting

We suggest you ask your companion to familiarise themselves with your statement (and your key points), the Fitness to Practise regulations, that they are ready to listen to your concerns or worries and that, should you need to take time out of the meeting due to becoming distressed, they are ready to support you.

Fitness to Practise Outcomes & Follow-up Actions

Broadly, potential outcomes depend on the level of concerns and where your case was considered under the regulations:

In case of **Minor, low level concerns** you will be given an action plan and a list of specific expectations as well as a range of informal steps that may be taken to manage and support you to progress on your course. These are sometimes called 'conditions'.

After the **Fitness to Practise Investigator meeting**, they may decide on of the following:

- 1) That your Fitness to Practise is not impaired and the matter is discharged;
- 2) That your Fitness to Practise may be impaired and is of significant enough concern to be referred directly to a Fitness to Practise Panel;
- 3) Or that your Fitness to Practise may be impaired but is of lower level concern, in which case the matter will be referred to the Chair of the panel for conditions and the Chair may decide to refer your matter to a full Fitness to Practise Panel.

The **full Fitness to Practise Panel's decisions** range from:

- Deciding that your Fitness to Practise is not impaired.
- That your Fitness to Practise is not impaired, but some of your conduct has deviated from the acceptable conduct for a student on a professional course and if repeated, you may need to have another Fitness to Practise investigation referral.
- That your Fitness to Practise is impaired, but as you have shown insight you will receive certain conditions you need to meet to continue on the programme.
- That your Fitness to Practise is impaired and you are suspended from your programme for a set period (which may mean you do not graduate when expected) with conditions imposed during your suspension and in respect of your anticipated return from suspension.
- That your Fitness to Practise is impaired and a recommendation for your expulsion on these grounds is made to the President and Vice-Chancellor as your continuation on the programme is incompatible with your behaviour, health or professional conduct. If you are so expelled, any exit award or transfer to another programme will be offered if appropriate.

In the case of the full Panel's decisions, the Panel will always work from the least serious outcome to the most serious one (termination on the course) and will weigh your and public's risk when deciding which of the outcomes is most appropriate.

Follow-up actions:

- If you have been supported by an Adviser, we suggest contacting them or advice@susu.org with the outcome to discuss it.
- If you had a companion not from our service, we would still suggest talking the outcome through with the appropriate person or service (see below).
- You can also receive academic counselling on the implications of the outcome on your course (in case of any conditions imposed) from your Personal Academic Tutor.
- The most serious outcome may be career changing, so we suggest getting support and advice from us on the next steps (e.g. accepting the outcome, or potentially lodging an appeal).
- If you need wellbeing support, don't forget about all the help that's available at the University. See Wellbeing information [here](#).

Fitness to Practise appeal

Should you decide to appeal the outcome of the full Fitness to Practise Panel, you need to first read and reflect on the Fitness to Practise appeal grounds ([Regulations Governing Fitness to Practise](#) Section A, point 12.2).

Once you have identified your grounds, you need to complete the [Fitness to Practise Appeals form](#) located in Appendix A of the regulations. You have 10 working days to submit your appeal, from the date you received your Fitness to Practise Panel outcome.

For more information and to receive support and guidance on the Fitness to Practise appeals process contact The Advice Centre on advice@susu.org or by tel. 02380 592085.

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Date: 08/21 Next review 08/22